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DISSENT, issued January 1, 1974, published quarterly, spring, summer, fall, and winter, by *DISSENT* Publishing Corporation, 509 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10017. Subscriptions: \$7.00 for one year; \$12.00 for two years; \$5.00 for students for one year; foreign subscriptions, including Canada, add \$1.00 for mailing costs per year. All payments from foreign countries must be made by United States money orders or checks payable in United States currency. Single copy, \$1.75. For special rates on bulk orders from organizations, teachers, etc., write directly to *DISSENT*. For information on newsstand and bookstore distribution write to: Eastern News Co., 155 West Fifteenth Street, New York, N.Y. 10001.

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HORIZON PRESS 156 FIFTH AVENUE NEW YORK 10010

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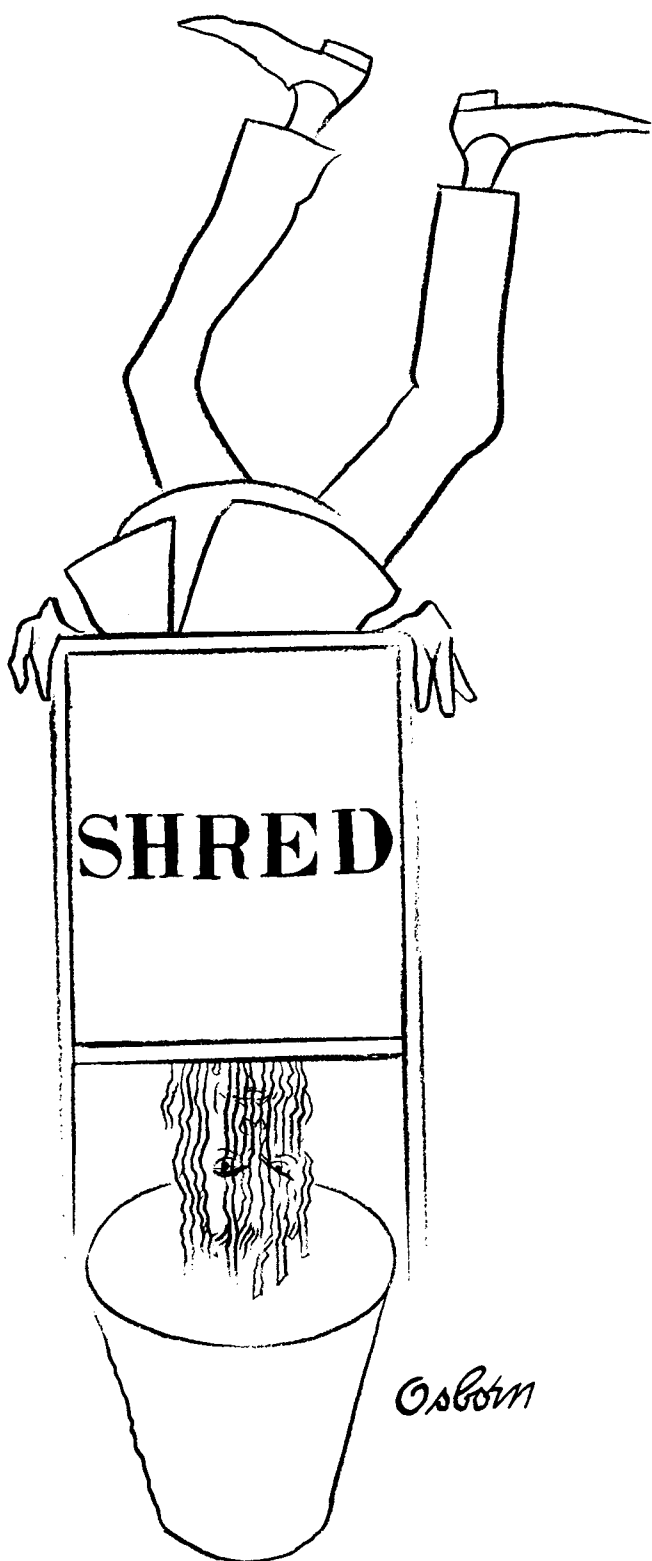
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Michael Walzer

Watergate Without the President

When Hamlet says, "Something is rotten in the state of Denmark," he means that the king is corrupt. He is not making any comment on the political life of ordinary Danish citizens, for there were no citizens and no political life outside the court at Elsinore. Today, we all know that something is rotten in our own state, but it isn't enough to point to the White House or to Richard Nixon and his entourage. The malaise seems more general. After all, this is a republic; our politics doesn't focus exclusively on a single person. Republics don't rot so readily as monarchies, nor is the rot cut out so easily. We need to talk about Watergate without the President.

1. Consider first the illegal transfer of vast sums of money from private corporations to the executive branch of the federal government in exchange for favors of one sort or another. Perhaps everyone knew that this kind of thing went on in Washington, but it is astonishing that it went on so *ordinarily*, with special offices set up to handle "government relations" and elaborately devious channels worked out to conceal the actual sources of the cash. What can one say about the financial integrity or civic courage of the American corporate elite? They would appear to possess very little of either. Nor do they seem even remotely equipped to play the role set out for them in the American ideology. Conventional doctrine

holds that corporate power balances governmental power. But if the corporations are so dependent on the state as to be infinitely open to extortion, where's the balance? Or, if state officials are so dependent on corporate funds as to be infinitely open to bribery, where's the balance?

Yet I can see here the makings of a new *laissez faire*. If the market in power and influence were only let alone, we will soon be told, if nosy reporters and ambitious attorney generals stopped interfering, a delicate equilibrium would establish itself between the government and the corporations, that is, between extortion and bribery—a new kind of harmony, with both

Middle East Crisis

Though all of us at DISSENT feel strongly about the Middle East crisis, we cannot print anything on this matter in the current issue that would be of value to our readers. The issue is being made up before the Israeli elections and the opening of negotiations between Egypt and Israel; anything we might say right now is bound to be dated by January. One of our regular correspondents was to send us a Letter from Israel, but decided to postpone it for similar reasons. Next issue, we hope!

The Editors

sides deterred from asking more than the market would bear. Perhaps it needs to be said that that's not a satisfactory arrangement in a republic, when what is being transacted every time money changes hands is the public business. We expect the public business to be done in public, with reasons and arguments exchanged, not cash, and with the rest of us watching. It is not easy to guarantee that, however, and clearly the private power of the corporations is not even the beginning of a guarantee; it is instead an inducement to criminal intrigue, to the highest form of white-collar crime.

So socialists have a new opportunity to argue their case: might not the independence of corporate leaders be enhanced if they were public officials, put on their oath, subject to periodic

review, responsible to a determinate constituency?

2. The corporate leaders who have done best in the current crisis are the newspaper owners and television managers—perhaps because they are the most public of our private men; their work is subject to a daily audit. But however grateful we are to them and to the reporters and commentators they employ, the political role of the media ought to worry us. In the 1950s and early '60s, the burdens of social change were carried by the courts. Today, the burdens of political reform are being carried by the papers and the networks. It made us uneasy then to see such large effects worked by men who had never been elected, who had no representative function. We thought their achievements less secure than they would have been had Congress joined wholeheartedly in the work—and we were right.

But the courts were active precisely because our elected representatives abdicated their moral and political responsibilities. The role of the media today derives from and reveals a similar abdication. For too many years, congressmen gave the President too much room, asked too few questions, took too few initiatives of their own. Many of them were content to be courtiers, merely resentful when they were excluded from the court, with little sense of an alternative politics. No doubt, they have enjoyed Nixon's fall, but they are also frightened by it and unable to respond in any coherent way.

The brief career of Sam Ervin as a republican hero suggests the possibilities of congressional action and also the weakness of Congress as an institution. Even the effectiveness of the Ervin Committee derived in large part from its adoption by the media: the senators and their witnesses put on a good show. And when they ceased to do that, the Committee ceased at the same time to command attention—almost as if it had gone underground. No doubt, it will emerge one day with legislative proposals of some sort, useful proposals, presumably, but also moderate and minor. There seems no reason to expect decisive action from the Congress. And yet, within our constitutional system, there is no other place from which decisive action can come. The media can only amaze us, stir us up, prepare us for action, but

NEW EDITORS

We are pleased to announce the addition of six new members to the DISSENT Editorial Board:

ROSE LAUB COSER, a veteran socialist who teaches at the State University of New York at Stony Brook and has specialized in the sociology of hospitals;

ROBERT HEILBRONER, the distinguished economist, author of many books, who holds the Norman Thomas chair at the New School for Social Research;

ROBERT LEKACHMAN, also a distinguished economist and author of many books, now teaching at the Lehman College of the City University of New York;

DEBORAH MEIER, an active figure in the recently formed Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee and a past contributor to DISSENT on educational subjects;

DAVID BROMWICH, a young writer who has appeared frequently in our pages these past few years and who is at present a student at Yale;

DAVID BENSMAN, who has been conducting the "In the Magazines" department in DISSENT and who has been active in the socialist youth movement.

At its last meeting the DISSENT Editorial Board voted to bring to an end the list of Contributing Editors, over the years largely honorific, and to express its thanks to all the persons on that list.

they can't speak for us, and they can't act in our name. In their hands, politics has become a spectator sport; Watergate is merely a scandal, and we are fascinated and delighted by every new detail in its exposure. But what is to become of the public business?

3. Perhaps the greatest problem is this: there is no opposition party in the United States today. That is why we have no way of responding to Watergate and no organized pattern of political work in which we can involve ourselves. Never has American politics seemed so anarchic as it does right now when individual candidates and would-be candidates scurry about trying to distance themselves from the scandals and establish their personal cleanliness. They cannot hope for more than marginal success—one consequence of Watergate as a public spectacle is a spreading cynicism about all politicians—but marginal success will probably be enough to win the next election.

The only way to combat the general cynicism, however, is for some group of men and women to offer an explanation of the present crisis and point the way to an alternative politics. The logical place for that to happen is the Democratic party, but where is the Democratic party? Who can find it? No doubt, there is a great reluctance among its possible leaders to seem to be seeking partisan advantage in a time of troubles. The result of that reluctance is that only personal advantages are sought. So everyone connives in fostering the proposition that the wickedness of a few men, and nothing more, lies at the root of the crisis, and that the personal decency of a few men, and nothing more, will suffice to deal with it. Face-to-face with Claudius, we are waiting for the Prince.

I DON'T want to deny the value of throwing the rascals out. That is a good thing to do, not only because of the pleasure it would involve. And there is something especially impressive about the machinery provided by the Constitution for throwing out the President himself. By the time this issue of *DISSENT* appears, we will probably know whether or not there is to be an impeachment. Right now, the odds seem heavily against it. It would require a kind of cohesiveness and collective resolution which neither Congress as a whole nor the Democratic party in Congress has yet demonstrated. But how splendid it would be to see those rusty

constitutional gears grinding into motion! How valuable the formality and solemnity of the law would be at this moment, after years of presidential lawlessness! And yet impeachment is only a ritual; one wants most what it would symbolize—the reappearance of a republican politics. That means, of presidential plainness, congressional energy, popular participation. For the moment, there is little sign of any of these. Political virtue is passively represented by those ordinary citizens who—it takes no courage—tell George Gallup week after week that they don't approve. Perhaps they are also not resigned. But what alternatives do they have? □

Stanley Plastrik

A First Word on the Chilean Tragedy

The worst intoxication is ideology. We must approach reality humbly.—OCTAVIO PAZ

THE brutal destruction of the Allende government by the military junta is a heavy blow to democrats and socialists everywhere who hope for peaceful change in their societies. Whatever its failings and errors, the Allende regime had many positive accomplishments to its credit: a deepening of the land reform program that had begun under the previous Christian Democratic administration; the extension, for the first time, of significant welfare and health benefits to the urban poor; a major advance in trade union organization and the power of unions in regulating industry and the mines. All this took place in an atmosphere of substantial political freedom: the opposition parties functioned without hindrance, the press remained free. According to Amnesty International, there was not a single political prisoner in Chile during the Allende period!

Now these achievements lie buried under

a ruthless assault by a military that betrayed its word. What the Christian Democratic leadership seems to have hoped would be a “white coup”—a kind of mild bloodletting after which the generals would step aside and let power fall to such politicians as Eduardo Frei—has in fact turned out to be a white terror, with hundreds, perhaps thousands dead, tens of thousands in prison, and a vicious dictatorship setting about to smash the workers. A spirit of terror stalks through Chile.

That the Nixon administration bears a heavy responsibility for the coup is hardly subject to controversy. Its enmity to the Allende regime was made plain from the moment the Chilean Socialist president took office in November 1970. At the time Henry Kissinger, though nominally an adviser to President Nixon, made several openly hostile references to Allende—the same Kissinger whose first act as secretary of state in 1973 was to recognize the military junta which just had illegally seized power. The story of American efforts to strangle Chile economically by cutting off credits, dumping copper on the world market so as to lower the price Chile could obtain for her major resource, and hampering Chile’s struggle for imports and her efforts to settle the claims of the expropriated foreign companies—all this is by now well documented. What deeper role the CIA may have had in the coup we still don’t know, but we do know that all along, while Washington was hostile to Allende’s democratic government, the Pentagon kept supplying arms to the army which overthrew it. Finally, lurking in the shadows were the transnational corporations, the expropriated copper companies. ITT, etc., all scheming to resume exploitation of Chilean resources.

These external pressures were a major difficulty for the Allende regime. Aggravating such difficulty was an internal economic crisis marked by inefficiency, mismanagement (in some, not all, industries), and runaway prices (at one point the government decreed a 300 percent price increase). It seems almost a miracle that nonetheless in the three years of the Allende government there were considerable successes, including a general rise in productivity during the first two years.

FROM THE MOMENT it took office, the Allende government suffered from a major handicap,

one that it took into sufficient consideration only during the first two years of its rule: it had failed to gain a majority of the electorate and consequently could claim only to have obtained a limited mandate. It took office in September 1970 with 36 percent of the total vote and with a majority of both houses in Congress opposed to it. It certainly had a mandate to improve the conditions of the working class, widen the agrarian reform, and complete the nationalization of the copper industry (which must be regarded as a national rather than a strictly socialist measure, since just about everyone in Chile, including the bulk of the opposition to Allende, favored it as a step toward economic independence). But it did not have a clear-cut mandate from the majority of the people to reconstruct the society along socialist lines.

At its peak, the left-wing parties comprising the United Popular Movement obtained 43.39 percent of the vote in the March 4, 1973, election. But the bourgeois parties of the opposition got 54.7 percent of the vote—a clear majority. One may argue, with some pertinence, that the Allende vote here showed a substantial nationwide increase of over 7 percent and that this could serve as encouragement for the direction it was taking. True, but only up to a certain point. For the increase of the pro-Allende vote came from poor peasants in the rural areas and slum-dwelling workers (*pobladores*) in the cities, while the middle class of Santiago and the other cities voted overwhelmingly against the United Popular coalition. By March 1973 the middle class of Chile (businessmen, shopkeepers, white-collar workers, government employees, professionals, technicians, small farmers, even the elite of the copper workers) had come to a collective decision to undertake a strong and active opposition to the government. It was indeed a bad moment for the Allende regime, its increase of votes notwithstanding.

THE REACTION of the Allende regime to this growing and increasingly militant opposition during 1973 was a disaster. Some of the political movements and parties behind the government enraged and frightened the middle class, which began to fear that a “proletarian dictatorship” was in prospect. Whether or not the CIA had a hand in the coup, it is a gross simplification to suppose that the coup was merely

or even mainly the work of American imperialism. Chile is not a banana republic, nor a new African nation. It is a country with large numbers of literate people, it has a long democratic tradition, and its political discourse has been markedly sophisticated. We can assert as an axiom that the generals could not have moved had they not gained large popular support and either explicit or implicit encouragement from the opposition parties. That the role of the U.S. was rotten throughout, we take for granted. But if one wants to try to understand what happened and to try to extract some political lessons from this tragedy, primary attention must be paid to the inner dynamic of Chilean politics itself.

These are the fundamental questions posed by the Chilean experience: Can a small, semibackward, unevenly developed country such as Chile achieve significant social change,—change that moves or verges toward socialism, in a nonviolent, mandated, and orderly fashion? Or is such an effort doomed to bring down upon itself violent counterrevolution? Must we renounce the viewpoint of democratic socialism, which proposes an organic linkage between its goals and its methods—democratic institutions, elections, orderly transition, the give-and-take of political debate, etc.?

And then comes another, still more difficult set of questions: To what extent is the Allende experience in Chile unique? To what extent characteristic of underdeveloped countries? And to what extent can one draw generalized lessons that pertain to Western advanced countries as well?

MUCH of what happened in Chile this past year still remains unclear, but we can make out the general outline of things. A process occurred throughout the year which led to the polarization of the country into two irreconcilable camps, and which was marked by the ideological intoxication of all the political parties of the country: Right, Left, Center. This process was accelerated late in 1972 by the Right, through a general strike of the business and industrial community which aimed at paralyzing the nation's sagging economy and at forcing the resignation of the Allende regime. Somewhat earlier, demonstrations of militant housewives and conservative students—the famous pots-and-pans demonstrations—had inflamed

middle-class aggression against the *rotos* (lower-class poor). The Christian Democrats, who in 1972 had turned sharply to the Right under Frei's leadership, now issued a series of demands they declared to be a condition for entering a coalition government and thereby assuring public order. These demands included the suppression of the *Miristas*, the extremist Fidelista and "Marxist-Leninist" youth organization; the suppression of the left wing of Allende's own Socialist party; an end to further agrarian reform; and a return to their owners of all enterprises seized during the recent strikes. Clearly, these demands were meant to be rejected by the government, and so they were. The moment of possible reconciliation that would save democratic institutions while allowing for further, if more moderate, social progress had apparently passed.

The strike of the business community in late 1972 brought about both a rapid economic deterioration and political polarization. In the course of the strike, Chilean workers, prodded by the extreme Left, took possession of hundreds of enterprises; and for the first time, there was an active call from some elements behind the United Popular Movement for the creation of organs of dual power (factory committees, soviets, etc.) associated with insurrection. But for the most part, all this was verbal, the rhetorical indulgence of inexperienced ideologues. Fears of revolution were aroused, but revolution was not undertaken. There could hardly have been a worse atmosphere for the Allende regime.

Thanks largely to the efforts of Allende himself and the Communist party, a truce was struck, which ended simultaneously the strike of business and the workers' occupation of enterprises. As a result of this crisis, the left-wing socialist Vuskovic was replaced as minister of the economy by the Communist Millas, who put forward a program aiming at increased production (which Chile desperately needed), a guarantee of profits to the business world, and an end to further nationalization. What Millas was proposing was—if Marxist historical precedents are needed—something akin to, though obviously not the same as, the New Economic Policy (NEP) which had been put forward by Lenin in the early '20s in order to stimulate production and regain support among masses of peasants and workers alienated by the earlier

policies of War Communism. It is possible, though no one can say with certainty, that if Millas's proposals had been accepted by the Allende government, the internal situation might have been cooled and the signals enabling the military coup not given. But this program was not accepted.*

From this point until the recent military coup, all political movements in Chile were in the grip of ideological paroxysm and a polarizing rhetoric that tore the country apart. The Socialist party, already unhappy with what it regarded as Allende's temporizing, adopted as its slogan, "advance without concessions." It opened negotiations with the *Miristas*, looking toward a merger, and it defended terrorism and the right of the *Mirista* militants to bear arms. It pressed the government to go further with nationalization and the creation of independent, extragovernmental agencies of power. The *Miristas* quickened their ideological intimidation of the Left parties, chanting the rhetoric of revolution despite the fact that, at most, these sons and daughters of Chile's bourgeoisie numbered a few thousand and had no influence at all in the trade unions. (In the May 1973 general trade union elections, the *Mirista* candidates received all of 1.9 percent of the vote!)

Allende himself—caught up in this turmoil, engulfed by waves of clashing rhetoric, more and more cut off from his own party—appeared to lose control of the machinery of government. His public posture grew uneasy, oscillating between extremes of language. He assaulted the Christian Democratic leaders as "fascists and

traitors," and then sent out feelers to form an alliance with their party. He spent time in sterile ideological discussions with Régis Debray; he permitted Fidel Castro, whom he had been warding off for two years, to barnstorm through Chile and indulge in rhetorical flights that he no longer used in Cuba. Allende got himself caught up in a futile struggle with the Chilean truck owners, many of them small, independent operators. And worst of all, he called upon the army to maintain order during the strike and factory occupations—thus, in effect, allowing the army to set itself up as arbiter of social conflicts. These zigzags, signs of desperation and loss of nerve, ended with Allende alone in his palace, slaughtered by the army. If there is any justice in the world, history ought to deal with him generously. Despite his errors, he gave his life for the peasants and the poor. Perhaps his finest moment came during his last message on the radio in which he urged the workers to stay where they were, not to march on the besieged Moneda where, he knew, the military would stage a bloodbath.

WHY DID the Chilean middle class end up so embittered and venomous in its attitude toward the Allende regime? Politically, that is the crucial question. Things had not begun that way. At first, segments of the middle class seemed sympathetic to the limited aims of the Popular Unity Movement. And some elements within the middle class voted for the less ideological among the pro-Allende groups, such as the left-wing split-off from the Christian Democrats. Middle-class people profited from the Allende reforms at the outset. Small shopkeepers found their business thriving, thanks to the new consumer power in the hands of workers, peasants, and the poor. Doctors and other professionals were busy ministering to whole new layers of Chilean society. Office workers and government functionaries found jobs in the rapidly expanding bureaucracy. The army was nursed along with favors. Technicians, after some adjustment to lower salaries in the copper mines, found they now had more control over the work situation. So, it seems fair to say, the relations between the government and the middle class during the first year and a half were, if not ideal, then at least not so aggravated as to threaten civil war.

* The role of the Chilean Communists has been extremely complex. The CP tried over the past year or so to play a moderating role in the Popular Unity Movement—unsuccessfully. It advanced proposals which can be regarded as of a social democratic character. At the same time, as the most thoroughly Stalinized of all Latin-American Communist parties, it continued to exhibit its old habits, struggling, for example, to maintain monopolistic control in the unions and other popular bodies that it controlled.

The Communist party of Italy, through its Secretary-general Enrico Berlinguer, has stated recently (c.f. *Le Monde*, November 8, 1973) that, in Italy, even a 50 percent electoral majority is not sufficient to assure a stable government of the Left—that an alliance with the Christian Democratic party is vital.

But, as the economic situation worsened in consequence of American pressure, internal social dislocation, mismanagement, and other difficulties, the middle class began to suffer. Increased tax burdens, inflation that wiped out the value of property holdings, an uncontrolled rise in price levels, and, most terrifying of all, the threat of revolution and terror—all these brought the middle class to a state of mind akin to Engels's petty-bourgeoisie *enragé*. While the frantic rhetoric of the far Left was mostly talk, without substance, and with no real potential for action, there began to develop a rhetoric of the Right, an outcry for order and the salvation of the nation, which was backed by the gun, the tank, the plane. At this point, we now can see, it was all too late: there was no democratic or peaceful way out, or at least there were no forces of sufficient strength prepared to take such a way out.

Partly because the popular front behind Allende was so heterogeneous in nature, and partly because Allende's own Socialist party was a melange of internally warring groups rather than a coherent socialist or social democratic party, the Allende government had put itself or allowed itself to be put into a hopeless position. Consider these elements: a government based on a minority of the population, an economic situation rapidly deteriorating, a polarization of the country into two warring camps. The middle class is profoundly alarmed by the threats of "proletarian dictatorship" that it hears emanating from supporters and allies of Allende. The *Miristas*, representing no major social force in the country, are given free reign to roam the countryside, leading illegal seizures of land—in an atmosphere of polarization, fear, extremism.

This means, in effect, that there grows on both sides an increasing contempt for democratic norms, on both sides a readiness to settle things by the gun. But meanwhile, in actuality, the Allende government continues essentially as a government of democratic reform, though elements near and around it make revolutionary noises.

An impossible situation! Either the government recognizes, *in time*, that the middle class constitutes a major social force whose interests must be consulted and whose fears must be allayed—and we speak here not of a tiny group

of capitalists, but of hundreds of thousands of people of quite modest means—or the Left decides that the course of democracy is a delusion, and that it must begin to prepare for the Leninist or Castroite dictatorship which the *Miristas* want. It is greatly to Allende's credit that he does not succumb to the authoritarian lure of the latter course, but it is by no means to his credit that he fails to recognize the necessary constraints which the democratic course demands. In practice, what follows is the worst of both possible ways: the middle class is roused to fright and fury, yet as long as democracy continues there is no way to prevent it from exercising its political strength. In a country that has a large middle class, it is simply impossible to combine an effort at peaceful social transformation with the methods, atmosphere, and rhetoric of a Leninist or Castroite revolution. In such a country, especially when a socialist government rests on a minority of the population, it must proceed so as to win the support of some segments of the middle class, neutralize other segments, and isolate still others. This means that the *Miristas* should have been held in check; efforts made to negotiate partial agreements with at least some segments of the Christian Democrats (who, in the first period of the Allende regime, had not set themselves up as an unyielding opposition). It means also that there is nothing in socialist principles that requires the nationalization of every industry, least of all one like the Chilean trucking industry.

IN EFFECT, then, we are saying that the Allende government might well have gone a little slower, might well have considered accepting the kind of program proposed by CP Minister of Economy Millas, in order thereby to have consolidated its support, increased production, stabilized prices, and defused the opposition. The crucial moment seems to have been in late 1972 or early 1973, though if the policy sketched here makes sense, it would obviously have been better to move in this direction a good deal sooner.

Of course, the authoritarians of the Left, from the Trotskyists to Paul Sweezy, have had their prescriptions ready: to them the lesson of Chile is that the Left fiddled around with democratic delusions, that it should have headed

straight for a dictatorship, and then there would have been . . . the wonders of Eastern Europe and Cuba! In reality, however, the path of "proletarian dictatorship" was not even a genuine option in Chile. For not only did the middle class and the Christian Democrats stand in the way, not only would the army have responded with even greater bloodiness than it has shown in its recent repressions; but many, perhaps most, of the Allende supporters had neither taste nor desire for such a course.

These, very tentatively, seem to us some of the conclusions to be drawn from the Chilean tragedy. A democratic commitment—which is not some sort of "luxury" or "weakness," but the very essence of the socialist idea—enforces upon socialists in office, especially when they represent a minority of the population, certain constraints and costs. Now it is true that this fact has been used by Social Democrats in Europe to justify ineffectuality and, at times, a virtual abandonment of socialist goals. But in a country like Chile—burdened by its semi-colonial past, characterized by a weak economy, a small working class, and a rather large middle class—a politics avoiding polarization and revolutionary rhetoric might have avoided the recent disaster.

As it is, who has profited? The U.S. companies; the Chilean military; the Chilean bourgeoisie—and the Latin-American Fidelistas. For the coup, which at the very least the U.S. winked at, is certain to strengthen the hand of those within the Latin-American Left who favor adventurism, violence, terrorism, dictatorship. And for this, too, the Nixon-Kissinger policy bears a heavy responsibility.

More, obviously, remains to be said, and it is possible that my remarks here will require correction in some respects. The discussion ought now to be undertaken, with great seriousness, by all those to whom the goal of democratic socialism remains urgent. □

Business Correspondence

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Cushing N. Dolbeare

Nixon's Nonprogram for Housing

On January 5, 1973, President Nixon, with but little advance warning, suspended all federal housing subsidy programs. The Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Farmers Home Administration of the Department of Agriculture were ordered not to process any new applications for subsidized housing. Projects "in the pipeline"—to use the jargon of housing officials for what has been approved but not yet built—were unaffected. Somewhat later, incoming secretary of HUD James Lynn announced that "*bona fide* commitments" would be honored even though the projects might not have been formally approved. An immediate, intensive study of the housing problem and housing programs was undertaken within the Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the Administration promised to reveal its new approach in September.

The Administration met its deadline, after a fashion. Late in September a presidential message was sent to Congress stating that the moratorium would be permanent, except that—again—existing commitments would be honored and a small number of additional units provided. Nine months of frenetic "study" had produced, in the words of Representative Henry Reuss, a member of the House Housing Subcommittee, "not a mouse but the promise of a mouse in 1975." In the words of the President,

The forces which will do the most to shape the future of housing in America will be the forces of the market place: families with sufficient real income and sufficient confidence to create an effective demand for better housing on the one hand, and builders and credit institutions able to respond to that demand on the other.

In other words, to state the matter simplistically, the Administration proposed to move toward greater if not total reliance on the private sector for housing construction and, perhaps, toward housing allowances for low-income families in order to meet their needs. Again in the words

of the President, "Our principal efforts should be directed toward determining whether a policy of direct cash assistance—with first priority for the elderly poor—can be put into practical operation."

To bolster the private sector, the President proposed a series of measures intended to improve the credit system. These included:

- removal of the ceiling on FHA and VA mortgage insurance, and urging states to do likewise, so that mortgage interest rates can rise as high as necessary to attract sufficient funds to the mortgage market;
- authorizing more flexible repayment plans under federally insured mortgages;
- establishing a tax credit for financial institutions investing in residential mortgages;
- supporting, through a reinsurance program, the development of private mortgage insurance companies.

These proposals have already been forcefully attacked by the very institutions they were designed to support as at best inadequate and at worst counterproductive.

To provide for the needs of low- and moderate-income families, the Administration proposes expansion of the experimental housing allowance program, authorized in 1970 and just beginning to get under way, with instructions to HUD to report findings within 18 months. During this interim period an additional 200,000 subsidized housing units will be approved, most of them projects with applications pending when the axe struck last January. The Administration justifies this nonprogram by the conclusion that the housing problem in this country is basically an income problem and, therefore, the solution is to raise incomes rather than provide housing.

TO THOSE of us who have long been concerned with the inequitable distribution of income and wealth in this country, the prospect of an Administration seriously concerning itself with the problems of poverty is an attractive one. But an income solution, even one of complete equality of income for all, would not solve our housing problem. For one thing, *housing now being provided by the private sector without subsidy is beyond the economic reach of 80 percent of American families*. Thus, if income distribution were equalized, everyone living in new housing would need some form of subsidy.

Yet the existing stock of housing is inadequate to meet the needs of a growing population, even if none of it needed to be replaced. Thus we must accept the fact that housing programs and housing subsidies will be needed to provide for population growth, for replacement of obsolete and inadequate housing, and, perhaps most important, for a genuinely free choice of housing locations.

Historically, the development of housing programs in this country has been constrained by a series of myths. The myth that an urgent national problem could be solved at little or no cost to the federal treasury led to two decades of housing programs, from 1949 through 1969, when the federal government more often than not made a net profit on its housing operations. The myth that private enterprise, supported by government insurance or subsidy programs to a modest degree, should be the major source of our housing supply has led to a pattern of housing construction so that, even in 1972 when housing subsidies were at their peak level, 64 percent of new housing was priced to serve households with incomes above \$10,000 and only 3 percent for households with incomes below \$4,000. At this rate, the 25 million families with incomes above \$10,000 would have new housing within 14 years, but it would take 179 years for the 15 million families with incomes below \$4,000 to receive new housing.

The Administration has accepted and even fostered a further myth: that the level of federal expenditures for housing subsidies is becoming intolerable, and that most housing subsidies benefit low- or moderate-income families. Thus we have the moratorium on new housing subsidies. Even worse, perhaps, is the effort to withhold public housing operating subsidies and instead to force local housing authorities to evict very-low-income families or charge them higher rents.

Housing subsidies in this country in fact do not go to low-income families. In 1972, for example, the total amount of federal housing subsidies was approximately \$12 billion. Of this amount, \$10 billion was in the form of tax subsidies, primarily to middle- and upper-income families, and \$2 billion was for housing subsidies to low- or moderate-income families. Not quite 20 percent of the \$12 billion went to

households with incomes below \$10,000; almost two-thirds, entirely in the form of tax subsidies, went to families with incomes above \$20,000. The Administration's proposals, by creating higher interest rates and thus greater tax deductions while shutting off subsidies for lower-income families, will increase these inequities.

IN 1968 Congress adopted a national housing goal calling for the production of 26 million new or rehabilitated housing units in 10 years. Six million of these were to be subsidized for low- and moderate-income families. The approach to formulating these goals was a modest one, based on replacement of existing substandard units rather than on the proportion of units that would need to be subsidized if everybody, including low-income people, were to be provided with equal access to new housing. In order to provide equal access, subsidized housing goals would need to be set in relationship to people's ability to pay for new housing. If we were henceforward to adopt this policy, one-quarter of all housing production should be in the income range now served by public housing for households with incomes below \$4,000 per year, and somewhat more than one-third should be in the income range served by the moderate-income programs of HUD and the Farmers Home Administration.

These should be minimum goals. To make up for past neglect, we should at least consider a program to replace, over a 10-year period, almost all of the housing now occupied by the 15 million households with incomes below \$4,000 in 1970. This would require a production rate for public housing, or equivalently subsidized housing, of 1.5 million units per year.

The critical nature of the housing crisis is illustrated not only by the Administration's proposals, but by the fact that none of the major housing bills currently proposed contemplates an approach on anything like this scale. Indeed, not only the Nixon proposals but the Democratic proposals as well call for the phase-out of public housing into a new and more flexible approach. By now experience should have taught us that such flexibility, particularly in the hands of producers or reactionary local governments, does not benefit those with greatest need. □

Larry L. Magarik

Clothing Workers vs. Farah

T oday most Mexican Americans live in the cities. Many came expecting better conditions than they had faced in the fields, others came from families of generations of urban workers. They all were disappointed—for poverty in the cities may in fact be more difficult to endure than in the valleys. The Farah Manufacturing Company, like most clothing manufacturers in the Southwest of the United States, is an industrial counterpart of the huge agricultural firms Chavez's United Farm Workers are battling.

Farah's large wealth and profits stem from the low wages that are the cause of the Chicano's plight. (For many of the women workers, the starting wage was \$1.70 when the strike began, the promised 10¢ per-hour raise never materializing.)

At Farah there are constant and degrading demands for increases in productivity—usually without the always-promised increase in pay. These constant speedups and pressures make the factories hard to bear (despite clean walls and air-conditioning), and “labor-saving devices” are merely used to drive the individual workers the harder. These are the conditions that led to the present strike.

The problems facing the Chicano workers at Farah, and, generally, Chicano workers trying to organize in Texas in the 1970s, are immense: the anti-union climate of government and business; the lack of a trade-union tradition in the state; the dire poverty and absence of job security which force people to take whatever they are given—and racism and fear, used effectively to block organizing efforts. Texas still is not a union state and it's not easily going to become one.

Farah strikers face one of the most stubborn reactionaries in the industry: William F. Farah. Farah told newspaper reporters that the strikers

are "filth." What the courts or the laws say does not bother him: Farah has vowed never to sit down and talk with any union.

The boycott of Farah products (Farah pants) provides a rallying point for action for diverse groups and individuals in Texas and elsewhere. The most intriguing of these is the rebuilding of the historic alliance between feminism and trade unionism. The young women on strike at Farah provide an inspiration for those militantly committed to the liberation of women throughout the country. In Texas, upper-class feminists are coming into close contact and cooperation with working-class women and their struggle. "Our sisters in the factories, fields, shops, and offices face the pressures of the labor market, the viciousness of exploitative employers, and a host of sex and class biases," proclaimed the Texas Women's Political Caucus in August, which resolved to try "to build a coalition between organized labor and the women's movement through Farah strike activity."

There also is a joining of established unions and youthful radicalism—and clearly there is mutual gain, and a long-run advantage to the cause of social justice.

The Farah Boycott, and the vigorous support given it by the AFL-CIO and the international unions, more solidly identifies the Chicano cause with the role and power of the labor movement. The Farah strikers and their union must reach out to masses of Americans with their plea for help. The Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America judged correctly that the fight could not be won if waged only by its own ranks, or even alone by the whole AFL-CIO, but must take in all the elements of a liberal-left coalition. The Boycott's single most significant source of support comes from the churches. The backing of hundreds of religious organizations, and volunteer efforts of clergy and laymen has built one of the most successful boycotts in modern times. Especially in the Catholic Church, but also in Protestant and Jewish communities, the Farah Boycott has once again turned American religion toward the question of social justice. Similarly, through the Amalgamated Clothing Workers' efforts to reach college students on at least 30 campuses, new constituencies are being activated in the cause of industrial democracy. □

Richard Lourie

Soviet Dissidents & Balance of Power

At first it appeared that we in the West were once again fated to watch helplessly as the media relayed reports of another East European tragedy. Amalrik's sentence was doubled, Medvedev's passport revoked while he was in England, Solzhenitsyn received death threats, Sakharov was attacked by the press. Krasin and Yakir were held for a year (three months longer than legal), and recanted in a closed trial that brought back memories of the '30s; then they suddenly surfaced at a news conference, which reminded us that these are the '70s and the game is being played by new rules.

These new rules go by the name of *détente* but how much they are changing, how much only obscuring the nature of the game, of course remains to be seen. The semipartnership with the Soviet Union creates a certain continuity in Soviet-American relations and seems to allow for possibilities of dialogue and influence (not just at the top), possibilities that did not previously exist when there were two separate and hostile monoliths. Thus, while we were outraged spectators of the invasions of Hungary and Czechoslovakia and of previous attacks on dissidents within the Soviet Union, we may now feel to some degree part of the game.

But a painful contradiction arises here, for the joining of the United States and the Soviet Union in a series of cooperative ventures is itself the most likely cause for the recent wave of repression. The recent campaign against the dissident intelligentsia has the purpose of depriving Soviet society of any free-thinking individuals who could interpret the new state of affairs and the arrival of thousands of American specialists in any way differing from the official line. It would be equally inconvenient for the Soviet authorities to have men like Amalrik explaining the Soviet system to these specialists.

The campaign against the Russian dissidents,

which certainly originated at the very top, is nothing new for the Brezhnev-Kosygin regime. As far back as 1966, its intentions toward non-conformist intellectuals were made clear with the trial of Sinyavsky and Daniel. The storm of protest that ensued was weathered by the regime without too much trouble, but at that time nothing but prestige was hanging in the balance. Now it appears that the Politburo, possibly under the influence of Andropov who is the head of the KGB and a full Politburo member, may have gone too far and caused a

strong counterproductive response from American scientists, senators, and intellectuals. This possibility, however, should not blind us to the fact that the campaign may never seriously have been intended to silence Solzhenitsyn and Sakharov—or, more precisely, such a step could have been taken only if the initial moves had met with apathy and indifference abroad. Nevertheless, the attention paid to Sakharov and Solzhenitsyn has the effect of obscuring the fate of many others, less well-known but no less valiant. Medvedev, in his forthcoming book,

Anna Akhmatova

Voronezh
To O.M.

—1936

And the town stands locked in ice:
a paperweight of trees, walls, snow.
Gingerly I tread on glass;
the painted sleighs skid in their tracks.
Peter's statue in the square points to
crows and poplars, and a verdigris dome
washed clean, in a cloud of sun-motes.
Here the earth still shakes from the old battle
where the Tatars were beaten to their knees.
Let the poplars raise their chalices
for a sky-shattering toast,
like thousands of wedding guests drinking
in jubilation at a feast.
But in the room of the banished poet
Fear and the Muse stand watch by turn,
and the night is coming on,
which has no hope of dawn.

Translated by STANLEY KUNITZ

Voronezh is a historical city situated on a tributary of the Don about three hundred miles to the south of Moscow. Peter the Great built a flotilla there for his conquest of Azov, near the mouth of the Don. The site of the battle of Kulikovo (1380), at which Dmitri Donskoi beat the Tatars, is not far away. Osip Mandelstam (the "O. M." of the dedication) lived there in exile from 1934 to 1937. Akhmatova's visit to him in 1936, after which she wrote this poem, is described in Nadezhda Mandelstam's *Hope Against Hope*. The

poem was originally published in 1940 without the last four lines, and was printed in full in the Soviet Union only in *The Flight of Time* (1965).

From *Poems of Akhmatova*. Selected, translated, and introduced by Stanley Kunitz with Max Hayward. Copyright © 1972 by Stanley Kunitz and Max Hayward. Reprinted with permission of Little, Brown and Company, in association with the *Atlantic Monthly Press*.

Ten Years since Ivan Denisovich, states that the chief aim of the long campaign against Solzhenitsyn is the destruction of the men around him, his spiritual comrades-in-arms, so that finally Solzhenitsyn would be isolated. The government's campaign could have had other aims as well—to smoke out sympathizers and to weaken those who feared to speak by making them endure the humiliation of silence.

A FASCINATING BOOK could be written about the relation of science and the state in Russia, a relation every bit as complex and telling as that between literature and the state. A desire to import the products of science torn out of the framework of free inquiry that made them possible is nothing new in Russian history. Peter the Great brought in large numbers of West European specialists to teach the Russians the latest innovations in welfare, navigation, construction, etc.—that is, to modernize and strengthen the state. Catherine the Great had fancies of importing the Enlightenment, but only until she saw its end product in the French Revolution. From the point of view of Russian rulers, the West has long appeared as a market for useful technology and a breeding place of dangerously libertarian ideas. Do the two go together? In any case, the Russians have always taken pains to separate them, to import the know-how and the hardware but leave the science behind.

The body of scientists working at a given moment is normally composed of a small number of creative spirits and a much larger group of the less original who follow in the wake of scientific breakthroughs, supporting them with applied experiments and finding their practical application. For many reasons, courageous and dissident thinkers are not usually recruited from the ranks of the latter group though there is always ample room for surprise. It is one of the peculiar ingredients of scientific tragedy that the most gifted men are led first to the discoveries that alter the world and only then to higher moral consciousness and revolt by the political abuse of their work. Other factors—the legacy of Lysenko, the use of drugs and mental institutions as a means of punishing dissent, the emphasis on the military exploitation of scientific innovation—may be swelling the ranks of sympathizers and making new Sakharovs. It is for reasons such as these

that it is more convenient for a dictatorial state to import rather than develop technological systems.

The Russians now are interested in computer technology for a number of reasons. They were slow to develop it because of ideological resistance to cybernetics in the years 1954–58. That hurdle behind them, Soviet scientists and economists are convinced that computer planning will function best in their planned economy and will be of particular benefit to them in helping allocate resources. The Soviet Union also is backward in this area because it has hampered the free flow of information that includes the exchange of scientists, journals, and ideas; unfettered access to information is essential in the field of computer technology because of its astonishing tempo of evolution.

Behind the talk of détente there is a tacit hope in some circles that computer technology applied to the domestic Soviet economy will cause it to function better and thus will produce a burgeoning middle class, comfort, leisure, rising expectations—i.e., the perfect base for a gradual loosening-up. Amalrik, in his book, *Will the Soviet Union Survive until 1984?*, stated his belief in the shakiness of such a hope long before détente:

... Americans apparently also believe that the gradual improvement in the standard of living, as well as the spread of Western culture and ways of life, will gradually transform Soviet society—that the foreign tourists, jazz records, and miniskirts will help to create a “human socialism.” It is possible that we will indeed have a “socialism” with bare knees someday, but not likely one with a human face.

It should be remembered that all the changes for which the dissidents are agitating are already “guaranteed” them by the Soviet Constitution, and that their chief strategy has been to press the authorities to conform to Soviet law and to expose them when they do not. This is, of course, a sensitive point for any Soviet regime that does not boldly proclaim its true totalitarian nature but instead pretends to govern the most democratic society on the planet. Meanwhile it is, of course, an error to think that the wrongs of Russian history can be corrected in the U.S. Congress. Since, at best, only minimal concessions can be wrung from the Soviet leaders, it remains to ask what one can reasonably expect to get accom-

plished here and, if a bare minimum cannot be achieved, whether détente is a serious blunder. The range of hopes expressed so far has been quite large and varied from the simple, essential effort to shield Solzhenitsyn and Sakharov to the suggestion in a letter to the *New York Times* that one or two East European nations be freed from Soviet control as a sign of goodwill (this latter I expect was offered in the spirit of Jonathan Swift). I think Senator Jackson has chosen wisely in having his amendment insist on the right of Soviet Jews to emigrate freely. This stipulation has the advantage of being fairly clear-cut in application, though not in wording. But one wonders what would happen if significant numbers of Latvians, Ukrainians, and Uzbeks, taking their cue from the Jews, decide to demand the same right for themselves. Israel at least wants the Soviet Jews.

I noted earlier that the détente has created a certain Soviet-American continuity, which has altered our way of thinking about the problem of not interfering in the domestic affairs of another nation. But there is a converse to this and an unpleasant one. Those criticizing the détente may suddenly find themselves in a position not unlike that of the dissidents, with the pressure of two states leaning on them, and branded as people who refuse to cooperate in the creation of a better or at least more peaceful world.

Disarmament, though less often in the foreground, actually provides the ultimate framework for all considerations of détente. The world still is under the threat of nuclear destruction simply because the bombs are still there and because the 28 years since Hiroshima have not demonstrated any noticeable improvement in mankind or its leaders. It is curious to reflect how this sinister fact has been buried under layers of new problems, a process aided no doubt by the desire to forget the unthinkable. It is to Sakharov's credit that he has not only resisted the pressures of his government but the more subtle pressure to let the prospects of disarmament or arms reduction obliterate the need for social reform. In fact, Sakharov's criticism of détente stems from his realization that anything like disarmament is really no more than wishful thinking, so that for the United States to strengthen the Soviet Union is only to make matters generally worse.

Peace, or as Solzhenitsyn calls it "freedom from violence," does not depend directly on the presence or absence of nuclear weapons, as the two prenuclear world wars and the host of post-nuclear conflicts clearly indicate.

The official line from Nixon and Kissinger presents us with the choice of laying a strong foundation for a better future or of losing that chance by insisting on too much. Some hint of the official view was contained in Kissinger's reply to McGovern:

We cannot be indifferent to the denial of human liberty, but we cannot, at the same time, so insist on transformation in the domestic structure of the Soviet system as to give up the general evolution that we are hopefully now beginning.

The word "transformation" here is used cynically to suggest that opponents of détente are impractical idealists who want nothing less than a miracle. At this point it is no longer possible to speak of Nixon and better worlds in the same breath, unless we strictly limit that latter conception to the balancing of power. In that case détente means that the Soviet Union and the United States engage in trade and that they carefully choose and limit areas of potential conflict. It also implies that a strong and stable Soviet Union is in the best interests of the United States and relative world harmony. If a stable Soviet Union is desired, then it makes sense not to aggravate its contradictions, that is, to exert only face-saving pressure in the area of human rights. Still, even if one swallows such a line, one is forced to ask whether the Soviets acted in a détentish way in the Middle East crisis. Finally, one must seriously ask if the U.S. administration is still capable of continuing with the ongoing processes of détente or whether its domestic problems make it particularly unsuited for international grand gestures.

In any case, the courageous Russian dissidents now face tremendous difficulties. It is probably too much to expect that they be remembered by the men in power now making deals and rearranging maps. But surely it is a moral obligation for the kinds of people likely to read this note that they remember not only Sakharov and Solzhenitsyn but also the other Russian dissidents, less well-known but not less significant, who speak for freedom. □

Czech Socialists Find Their Way

The conference of exiled Czechoslovak democratic socialists at the Swiss Trade Union Center in Rotschuo this past September is yet another straw in the wind, serving notice that an easing of tensions between Washington and Moscow does not resolve the internal problems of Soviet-sponsored regimes in Central and Eastern Europe any more than the French subsidies to Imperial Russia reconciled Lenin to the Czar. But that is not all; such conferences also demonstrate that Central and East European opposition movements are capable of functioning with some effectiveness under the new international conditions.

It is significant that the conference met in Switzerland. Traditionally, European opposition movements, suppressed at home, have sought haven in neutral countries: in Switzerland, Sweden, or Holland. In the cold-war atmosphere, however, exile groups came to function as shadow governments, much like the governments-in-exile in World War II that had been sponsored by a major power, say in London, and waiting for the day when a disputed territory would pass into their control. The shift to Switzerland signals a return to the traditional role of an exiled opposition: to represent domestic opposition rather than a foreign, external opponent.

It is doubly significant that this was a conference of the Social Democratic party. That party had been liquidated after the Communist coup of '48, its officials imprisoned and its membership transferred en masse into the CP. Since that time, democratic socialists tended to look to a democratic transformation of the CP as the optimal course for the future. The fall of Dubcek and the subsequent collapse of the Czechoslovak CP—which survives, much purged, only as an instrument of Soviet policy in occupied Czechoslovakia—created a need for an alternative organizational platform. The rebirth of Czechoslovak Social Democracy as a distinct political organization might serve to provide such a platform.

That rebirth is significant for Czechoslovak opposition in exile as well.

In the years of the Cold War, exiled social democrats found themselves out of place in the West. The Cold War fostered an identification of opposition to Communism with unqualified support of American capitalism, vintage 1953. While the Central Executive Committee of Czechoslovak Social Democracy continued to function in exile, the tone and content of opposition activities abroad were set by others in the community of Czechoslovak exiles who had fewer scruples about identifying with the rhetoric of John Foster Dulles. Holding a conference of exiles in Switzerland thus represents a political shift from the ideology of the West to that of domestic Czechoslovak opposition.

The conference was strictly a self-help operation whose first act was to pass the hat and impose dues upon its members. This approach has its drawbacks, such as the delay of crucial mailings until the money for postage can be found. But it also represents a basic strength: the exiled social democrats are no one's agents; they are free persons, part of a domestic opposition.

Democratic socialism rather than "the West" represents today the viable alternative in Central and Eastern Europe. The early years of the Cold War gave rise to an illusion—that the experience with gunpoint Communism had totally discredited anything even vaguely connected with socialism. Suiting Western strategy, this illusion became one of the truisms of the '50s. The gradual relaxation of the '60s created the need for an opposite illusion, that after 20 years the peoples of Central Europe had grown accustomed to autocratic rule and had lost all desire for democracy, and that all they asked was slightly better treatment from their rulers. This second illusion suited the new strategic needs of the West. In the United States, the first illusion is the illusion of cold warriors, the second the illusion of incautious détente-nicks.

The Czechoslovak Spring of 1968 made it clear that both views were illusory. The opposition in Czechoslovakia showed itself as a principled opposition whose goal was not only "democratization" but democracy. At the same time, this opposition proved to be socialist rather than "anti-Communist." It was the hope of the Czechoslovak Spring to make socialism

genuinely democratic. Thus a viable alternative to Soviet repression in Central and Eastern Europe today cannot build on the ideologies of cold war or *détentism*—it must respect the clear preference of the people for socialism and democracy.

It is, however, a long step from a covert popular consensus to a clear, articulate program. The divergence of views in the early sessions of the Czechoslovak conference of democratic socialists showed clearly how brittle such consensus is. Men and women living and thinking under rigorous censorship, in virtual isolation from each other, inevitably develop highly idiosyncratic versions of even a common ideal. The conference included members of the exile of the '50s and the exile of the early '60s—but also just as many participants of the revival of Social Democracy during the Czechoslovak Spring of 1968, divided in turn between those who sought to reconstitute the social democratic movement as an explicitly political party and those who hoped to create a broad pressure base in the form of democratic socialist discussion clubs. In addition, it included participants who owed no allegiance to any of the past social democratic organizations, but only to the idea of democratic socialism.

To the participants it seemed like a minor miracle that the conference met at all, and that, when it did, it did not break up in its very first hours. That it did not is a testimony to the efficacy of discussion. As the conference progressed, participants began to communicate. Sharp edges wore off and were replaced by mutual appreciation. The conference was a microcosm: it made the point that, given the chance to speak freely and think together, the people of Czechoslovakia would quickly transform the vague consensus into a clear alternative program of socialism and democracy.

Under present conditions, there is little hope for an opportunity to speak out and think in Czechoslovakia. With the easing of international pressures, the Soviet-sponsored regimes in Central Europe have both the possibility and need to institute tighter ideological controls. Sociological research, which for a short time became possible during the Czechoslovak Spring, made it clear that the regime cannot hope for support from more than 8 percent of the population, and even that is being eroded

by the clear identification of the régime with a foreign occupation power.

That is where the segments of Czechoslovak opposition presently in exile become important—as a domestic opposition beyond the reach of the domestic police. They can function as a catalyst, expressing and discussing what may be universally thought but cannot be openly said at home. This, in fact, is what they are doing. Czechs and Slovaks abroad today support three publishing houses, which offer some 30 titles annually, support several journals and quarterlies that maintain a consistently high level of political and cultural debate and provide a forum for major Czech and Slovak thinkers and writers.

It would be foolish to read this in cold-war terms, and see the conference as the seed of an alternative regime that will somehow emerge abroad and displace the domestic one. None of the people who today make up the social democratic opposition abroad has such ambitions. Change in Czechoslovakia will come from within, and the men and women who will bring it about will come from within. So, in the last analysis, will come the ideas, though in a roundabout way. The task of the exile is precisely to articulate the vague consensus of the domestic opposition and make it available as a clear alternative.

Change in Central Europe is, of course, contingent on international conditions. Only if these conditions bring about a temporary weakening of Soviet power or vigilance, or if they create a temporary Soviet willingness to compromise, can there be change. But change depends no less on the ability of Central European nations to take advantage of such temporary slackening in the determinism of history.

Czechoslovak democratic socialists in exile—precisely because they are domestically oriented, neutrally based, and dependent solely on their own resources—are helping make such clear conceptions available. They contend with innumerable obstacles, from a Henry Kissinger determined to purchase international stability by sanctioning domestic repression to finding money for postage stamps. But this opposition is forging patterns of resistance to oppression without the benefit of foreign sponsors or the hope of major conflict, and it has the strength of an idea whose time, in the opinion of a vast majority of Czechs and Slovaks, has come. □

Henry Pachter

Détente — Reality and Myth

When the devil is seen in conversation with the pope, one may wonder who is converting whom. And when both the governments of the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. profess an ardent desire for détente, one may feel entitled to a definition of that concept. Détente may be an illusion or a deception, a tactic or an attitude; but one thing it is not—a conception of international relations, an institutional framework for peace. At best it is a procedural proposal leaving the participants obligated to explain what the procedure will lead to. Will it be a neater partition of the world into two camps? a better system of alliances? a condominium of two superpowers? a new balance of powers with three, four, or perhaps five players in the game? or a system of collective security? It is easy to show that neither of these conceptions is realistic or will work over a longer period of time; some indeed may diminish the chances of peace. It is much harder to say what we and other leading powers could or should do to make the détente meaningful.

A critic is always liable to the rejoinder, And what do you propose? Therefore I believe that nothing short of the abandonment of large areas of sovereignty by all powers can assure peace. Individual gestures of détente, and even material concessions, will serve the goal of peace only if they lead to an eventual surrender of sovereignty to an

international body. Here are some of the measures that, in ensemble, might constitute a criterium of deescalation: disarmament under inspection, abandonment of foreign bases, and disclosure of military resources; cessation of ideological warfare, of wars of liberation and police actions abroad, of arms deliveries to client states; freedom of exchanges, travel, and information; democratic controls of army and intelligence establishments; the wrecking of that pillar of Cold War shame, the Berlin Wall. Since we see nothing of the kind, and since the defusing of conflicts is not gathering momentum, I fear that the present détente, at best, is a diplomatic technique—and perhaps a means to cover up a gigantic loss of control that may still result in utter chaos, with a dozen nuclear powers racing toward doomsday.

THE PRESENT DÉTENTE between the United States and Russia was first planned in 1968, or even earlier. The Strategic Arms Limitations Talks (SALT) were scheduled to begin and the Spring of Prague had raised hopes for a humanized Communism—when Soviet troops suddenly marched into Czechoslovakia, and President Johnson had to postpone the rapprochement thereby also prolonging his (and our) agony in Vietnam. Johnson's decision may have been necessary for emotional reasons, which play a great role in domestic politics. But diplomatic practice and the doctrine of coexistence prescribe that governments should deal with each other without regard to one another's morals. This is the plight of all sensitive

This article was first drafted last May, as a warning not to overestimate the benefits of détente. It was brought up-to-date after the Yom Kippur war. I may now have to warn not to *underestimate* the technical possibilities of détente.

people involved in the political life of states; in diplomacy, a *fait accompli* must be acknowledged, a crime forgotten, and an illegitimate regime sooner or later has to be legitimized.

Indeed, the SALT talks were resumed later on, and at about that time Professor Kissinger, then still at Harvard, discerned no fewer than five distinct periods of “*détente*” between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R., each introduced with great hopes for a world without anxiety, and each followed by a thumping letdown. Yet, as presidential adviser, Henry Kissinger tried again. He went to China. He skillfully negotiated a truce for Vietnam. And he supported Willy Brandt’s *Ostpolitik* that put an official end to World War II and the so-called Cold War in Central Europe: in return for a guarantee of the liberty of West Berlin, the West recognized the existing borders between the two German states, Poland, and Czechoslovakia, ratified Stalin’s conquests, and thereby prepared a rapprochement between the NATO and Warsaw Pact countries. Now it was also possible to begin talks about the mutual withdrawal of troops from Central Europe. The ensemble of these maneuvers is called the “*détente*” or, in Kissinger’s words, spoken by Nixon, a shift from confrontation to negotiation.

But hardly had Kissinger assumed the title of secretary of state and received the Nobel Peace Prize, when he was reminded of Solon’s advice to King Croesus that no one should be deemed happy as long as he is in office. The new confrontation in the Middle East shattered not only the illusion of *détente* but also the underlying theory, which first had been urged by critics of U.S. foreign policy and then been accepted by its makers: that world politics has moved from an era of bipolar hegemony to an era of multilateral relations. This was a favorite theory of Europeans (and of their friends in the United States); for, obviously, if this was true, they ought to free themselves from their American tutelage. Emotionally, the bipolar con-

frontation was dubbed “cold war”; politically, it was shown to be unrealistic, tradition-bound, and needlessly inflexible. In practical terms, the United States was being asked to pay more heed to the advice given by smaller partners who were getting increasingly independent and self-confident.

Those who thought this way must have been deeply disappointed by the course of events in October. The crisis demonstrated strikingly that (1) the conflict could not have become acute but for the commitment of the superpowers to their client states; (2) it could not have been settled without the quickly established cooperation of the same superpower rivals; (3) the secondary powers, including permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, had to accept, under vociferous protest, the dictates of the superpowers; (4) even China, that paragon of polycentrism, did not dare exercise its veto in the Security Council.

This lesson should be twofold. Any new crisis is likely to take us back quickly to a bipolar confrontation; but such confrontation immediately will bring into play the need for the two rivals to cooperate in order to keep the crisis from escalating and involving them directly. No matter how much freedom the smaller powers may enjoy between times of crisis, in the last resort the big powers will reestablish their hegemony, even their condominium. And no matter how bitter the superpowers’ rivalry, in times of crisis they must set a limit to that rivalry. Negotiation and confrontation, therefore, are not alternatives but complements.

This had been the situation throughout the period of the so-called Cold War, too. The superpowers then were rivals, but they respected each other’s territories, and they were jointly responsible for maintaining the status quo, especially in Europe. Two U.S. secretaries of state who were not known for being soft on Communism, John Foster Dulles and Dean Rusk, looked on when Russian tanks crushed freedom in Hungary and Czechoslovakia. Vice versa, it needs to

be remembered that Stalin allowed the smashing of the Greek revolution and, later, his successors conceded United States hegemony in the Western hemisphere.

The relationship between "Cold War" and "coexistence" has always been dialectical. One nation's deterrent assured the other's respect for agreed-upon boundaries. The maneuvers to "stabilize" this situation are usually referred to as "Cold War." In that equilibristic exercise, however, some boundaries were not agreed upon but *tacitly* accepted. Only when *de facto* observance was converted into *de jure* recognition did the powers speak of "détente"—the removal of a source of possible friction, a relaxation of international tension in a specific area.

While no one who desires peace will refuse such a limited détente, it is useful to remember that *détente* is not necessarily *rapprochement* (the East Germans have not agreed to that, for instance) nor should it be confused with *entente*. All that the three words have in common is a French root. Moreover, as Kissinger made clear, the détente is never final but a continued process of piecemeal accommodations.

Also, détente in one area does not imply détente in all others. In the light of what has been said about the recurrence of bipolarity, this casts an ominous shadow on any possible era of good feelings. Realistically, the détente has been applied only to Central Europe, while Asia and Africa still are subject to Khrushchev's amendment to the Doctrine of Coexistence: thus "wars of liberation" may be supported by a superpower that supposes that in so doing it can shift the balance in its favor. This past October we saw that amendment applied. The failure of this attempt, alas, will not result in abrogation of the doctrine.

On the contrary, coexistence is held to be consistent with ideological warfare, with efforts to build better, i.e., more destructive arms, with the continuation of regimes that have aptly been called "mobilization states," with those physical and institutional barriers

that prevent communication between peoples, such as restrictions of travel and trade, such as censorship and the uncouth symbol of a whole nation's captivity, the Berlin Wall.

Coexistence not only tolerates the arming of satellites, it even calls for the cold-war equilibrium of strategic arms. In the new SALT talks, the U.S. and U.S.S.R. agreed that each should keep a few antimissile missile systems but should refrain from building the "thick" ABM systems that are costly and (for technical reasons I cannot explain here) tend to destabilize the system. These talks will continue and, with any luck, produce further agreements limiting multiple warheads and regulating the deployment of other strategic weapons. But with all that "limitation," we shall not see a single missile dismantled (except, of course, where an obsolete one is to be replaced by a more modern one).

These negotiations are intended to *freeze* the results of the Cold War arms race, and they follow the spirit of the limited Test Ban of 1963 and the Nonproliferation Treaty of 1968, which attempted to stabilize the balance not only between the two superpowers but also between the superpowers on the one hand and all others on the other. Characteristically, they are bilateral only, while the United Nations Disarmament Conference languishes in irrelevance.

There is little prospect for any limitation on conventional arms (which by now are more deadly than any used in World War II) or for a ban on the sale or transfer of highly sophisticated weaponry to client states. Some of these modern weapons have been made idiot-proof, so that even illiterate fellahin can operate them, with the computer doing all the work. Such weapons in the hands of "national-revolutionary" governments become all the more dangerous as the nuclear powers are stalemated.¹

¹ I cannot agree with Willy Brandt's statement at the U.N. General Assembly, that small powers are not warlike. Of 90 war actions since 1945, 80 involved Third World nations.

These two developments—parity among the superpowers and the arms race among the small countries—may alter the power relations under conditions of détente. The larger the number of missiles and the greater their effectiveness, the smaller becomes the difference between the stronger and the weaker force. Willy-nilly, therefore, America has recognized Russia's "parity" and abandoned the race. Its apparent superiority in Polaris should give it retaliatory power, but its greater density of population makes it more vulnerable than the Soviet Union to a first strike. Since it must avoid escalation, it cannot credibly assure its allies automatic support in case of a crisis. Parity, the outcome of the Cold War, seems to be the real inner reason for détente.

Perhaps in recognition of the greater vulnerability and lesser effectiveness of U.S. power, the American public seems to have gotten tired of world politics and the imperial role. The Mansfield resolution and dwindling army enrollments may force the liquidation of overseas bases and the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Central Europe. A "thinning out" of forces on both sides of the Iron Curtain was first proposed by British Foreign Minister Eden in 1954, then by Polish Foreign Minister Rapacki in 1956–57. We have revived it now and suggested the Russians withdraw more troops than the Western powers because they started out with more and are closer to the scene. The Russians have countered with a demand for numerically equal withdrawals of troops *along with* their atomic weapons!

Here, indeed, is something to negotiate about, for the whole situation is fraught with danger and anxiety. Above all, the fear that asymmetrical reductions of forces might destabilize the equilibrium characterizes a cold-war relationship and indicates scant détente in any more profound or reassuring sense.²

² To avoid possible misunderstandings, I must refer to earlier articles in *DISSENT* which have argued that this outcome of the Cold War, distasteful as it may be for anyone who cares for freedom, had to be accepted. We have not advocated wars of

The insecurity of the new balance has been felt by the Europeans for about 10 years and, beginning with General de Gaulle, they have tried to find accommodations of their own with the Soviet Union. For a while there lurked the terrible prospect of a dozen nuclear powers, each hell-bent on thwarting any attempt to give peace a structure. Or there might be a European nuclear power holding the balance between the United States and the Soviet Union. A third choice is a Confederation of Europe, allied with the United States in a new kind of relationship. Western Europe still needs and indeed wants America's atomic umbrella and the presence of American troops, for under this shield alone can the smaller states hope to wield their own swords. But they also desire more autonomous policies for themselves, more consultation in NATO councils with the Americans, and in the end perhaps an independent role either within or outside NATO.

Could a more united Europe, as it may emerge one day, act as a third superpower? Strangely enough, the U.S. State Department is not alone in regarding these developments with apprehension. The Russians, too, have shown signs of nervousness at the prospect of European unity; most of all they abhor,

liberation, we have scorned John Foster Dulles's boast to "roll back the Iron Curtain," we have pleaded for the recognition not only of the GDR and the Chinese People's Republic but of all existing borders and governments. I for one would not propose that the U.S. and Soviet governments, neither of which has clean hands in matters of civil rights, should make their mutual relations dependent upon the other's conduct vis-à-vis its racial, ethnic, religious, and philosophical minorities. Hard as it may be for some of us to acknowledge, in the atomic age the preservation of peace has priority over the fight for liberties. The latter cannot be entrusted to governments anyway, but must and will remain the cause of private persons and their free associations.

Having said this, however, I do not think we have to feel obliged to *like* the state of affairs that we have to recognize as a dire reality. Still less do we need to justify and idealize the new situation, to conceal its dangers and calamities, or even to praise it as a more desirable and possibly more ethical way of conducting foreign policy.

of course, the possibility that a dynamic German leadership might use such a European force to fulfill its national aspirations. On entering the United Nations, Willy Brandt put everybody on notice that Germany has not abandoned her claim to reunification—which to others seems a threat. Czechs and Poles agree with the Russians that two Germanys are preferable to one; Germany's permanent partition was the admitted purpose of the "détente." Paradoxically, therefore, the U.S.S.R. has indicated that the Americans should stay in West Germany—to keep an eye on their allies, so to speak. Both America and the Soviet Union seem to prefer the old cold-war pattern of antagonistic cooperation to the risk inherent in a more fluid situation.

The Russians even like the existence of NATO, insofar as it isolates Germany from its eastern neighbors; but of course they like a weak NATO better than a strong one, and they hope to achieve both goals—maintaining the division of Europe as well as loosening of NATO's cohesion—at the coming European Conference on Security and Cooperation. What we can anticipate to happen there can only be described as "Cold War," i.e. the continuation of the maneuvers, by both the U.S. and the U.S.S.R., to increase their influence in each other's orbits. The Russians are going to use the sweetest language of détente to persuade the West Europeans that they need fear nothing from them³ but, on the contrary, are welcome to seize the great opportunities of trade and investment in the vast Soviet empire.

Next to their apprehensions of China, the need for Western capital and know-how is the most serious reason for the Soviet Union

³ Brezhnev had the nerve to say that the Conference members should undertake not to interfere in other nations' domestic affairs. Unfortunately, it is also true that Brezhnev's peace offensives bear an embarrassing resemblance to those of the late Joseph V. Stalin. There are the same "peace congresses" where dissent from the Soviet line is shouted down, the same demagogic appeals to the peoples, over the heads of their governments, to disarm coupled with the same refusal to allow inspection; there are the same promises of verbal benevolence in return for material concessions.

to seek a détente in the West. This is not the first time that the Communists have addressed themselves to capitalism for funds. As early as in 1920, Chicherin, Lenin's foreign minister, told the World Economic Conference at Genoa that Russia's markets and "concessions" (investment opportunities) might save capitalism from its postwar recession. Today the Soviet Union needs sophisticated machinery and capital to satisfy its pressing consumer needs. Despite its successful crash programs in rocketry and weaponry, it still is an underdeveloped country; its people have less to spend individually for their food, clothing, housing, education, and recreation than some of the peoples in satellite countries. Dissenters in the Soviet Union propose to cut the defense and foreign-aid budgets, to liberalize the economy, and to grant the people more freedom of expression. It is precisely to avoid such a course that the Soviet government desires a détente and foreign capital.

If this analysis is correct, two points are in order. Liberalization in the Soviet Union and foreign participation in its modernization program are *alternatives*; the latter is sought to avoid the former. It is useless, therefore, to try what some Western politicians would like to do: demand liberalization in the name of détente, or even to make Western aid dependent upon domestic liberalization. Some have been so imprudent as to advertise their belief that economic cooperation will lead to some kind of "convergence." That may be true in the very long run, but for the moment it has provoked an added watchfulness in Moscow and new repression in the satellite capitals. The Russian dissenters seem divided on the question whether external sanctions may help them. The Soviet rulers, by contrast, always displayed great touchiness on such matters. They resent, nay fear, any kind of interference in their domestic policies. Besides, strings of this kind normally are not attached to diplomatic transactions because

they are counterproductive or produce retaliation in kind. What if the Russians were to refuse to do business with us until we had assured civil rights to every last Black Panther?

On the other hand; the Soviet Union requests, as a measure of détente, the status of a "most favored" nation, which means that its goods benefit from the lowest customs duties on entering the United States. The trouble with this demand is that the Russians cannot reciprocate. Since their foreign trade is a state monopoly, which places its orders not with the lowest bidder but according to the political needs of the Soviet government, the United States would get a worthless *quid* for its valuable *quo*. The Russians, however, consider this privilege a test of our sincerity; for they still suffer from the inferiority complex of the *nouveau riche* who does not really believe that he has arrived until the establishment has admitted him to its most exclusive club. There also is the pseudo-Marxist superstition, shared by both the Kremlin and American capitalists, that a détente needs an economic underpinning besides the exchanges of ballet troupes and orchestras.

This latter contention can easily be disproved by statistics. Germany's trade was most intense with the countries it attacked in 1914; it was almost nil with Russia and with Japan in 1939. It may be true that Brezhnev considers capitalistic investment in the Soviet Union a kind of hostage; he may believe that a country whose bankers lend their money to Russia would not attack her for fear of losing it. Wall Street bankers also have reasoned that closer business relations might mollify the Russians.

The U.S. Department of State, on the contrary, has taken a troubled view of the whole proposition. The credit the Russians are requesting amounts to billions of dollars, more than the GNP of many members of the United Nations. At least some of this money would free Soviet funds for distribution to client states; why should the United States finance Russian military aid to Egypt or

Russian credits to India? Second, the credits and supplies requested by the Soviet Union would build permanent installations and production units inside Russia; in return, the Soviet Union promises to deliver perishable goods, such as natural gas, over a long period of redemption. While the exchange may be advantageous to U.S. firms in terms of profits, it certainly would shift the balance of production capacity, and thereby of power, to the Soviet Union. Incidentally, German and Japanese creditors find themselves cheated as Russian gas deliveries fall short of the specified, contracted quantities.

These examples point up the dilemma faced by any statesman in working toward a détente: shall he start with piecemeal measures he hopes will lead up to a more solid, overall friendship—from détente to rapprochement to entente? Or is not the overall entente, a basic change in the character of the relationship between the two countries, required as a precondition for a détente which alone makes individual measures of relaxation and accommodation meaningful and possible?

The question is even more difficult to answer if relations with the allies are taken into account. Largely because the Moscow-Washington rapprochement has made the NATO governments suspicious, the U.S. also needs to be suspicious of their relations with Moscow. It fears that an overall détente would loosen the NATO ties too much, and therefore it has given the impression that it must be dragged to the conference table instead of adopting détente as its own sovereign decision.

To be sure, we are using the language of détente, cooperation, and negotiation; I guess one must welcome the diplomatic profession's return to the tradition of hypocrisy (see footnote 3). We almost have no other choice, because it has become near-impossible to continue the language of confrontation. Our allies are seeking a relaxation of the rigid NATO frame; we can hold them in the fold only by helping them to see how far they can go on that tricky road. But

Dr. Kissinger himself would not pretend that he is eagerly looking forward to the European Security Conference. Between the Scylla of a United Europe and the Charybdis of a Europe split so badly that Soviet diplomacy can pick the countries up one by one, the United States tries to find a new framework for the NATO alliance. Dr. Kissinger therefore has offered our allies a new "Atlantic Charter" which would guarantee that we continue to speak in their name. Their not too polite "No" was presented to him by the Danish foreign minister, who, for the first time, spoke in the name of all of Western Europe. After the recent Yom Kippur war, too, the NATO allies dissociated themselves from the United States—and, one guesses, not just over the procedural question of being consulted.

Thus we are forced to agree not just to one détente, that with the Soviet Union, but to a second one, that with our allies. The meaning of that second détente was spelled out by Dr. Kissinger even before he joined the government: "U.S. acceptance of European autonomy implies European acceptance of American autonomy with respect to areas in which European concern has lessened." But we cannot simply have one détente with Russia, another with China, and a third with Europe; each influences or interferes with the other. If America intends to play its cards alone, or with minimal concern for its allies, we shall soon have neither bipolarity nor multipolarity but simply chaos.

The picture that emerges reminds one of a Chinese juggler who has to balance a dozen rotating dishes on so many rods while riding a bicycle. Admittedly, Acheson, Dulles, and Rusk had it easier; their job was only to balance one bear. Kissinger's performance seems to be so dazzling precisely because he does not stand on firm ground and lacks any overall conception. The brilliance of his performance at the Vietnam negotiations and the Sinai cease-fire negotiations can hardly conceal the fact that in both cases his assignment was to cover a rescue-and-retreat operation; he saved what there was to be

saved of a bad bargain, and in both cases substituted a semblance of peace for a war that could not go on much longer. These maneuvers have earned the epithet "détente," although the tension between the warring parties has not been removed.

What has been said of the previous U.S. policy, the so-called Cold War, also applies to its so-called policy of détente: it merely reacts to the initiatives of other powers. It accepts necessity but fails to create new conditions for a more permanent organization of peace⁴—hardly a record to justify a Noble Peace award.

History will say that Kissinger recognized the need for a more flexible American policy and possibly even a retrenchment. In articles published before 1969, he called for liquidation of the Vietnam war, for recognition of the People's Republic of China, for adjustments in the NATO structure to the greater independence and growing stature of our allies, for abandonment of the idea that the United States had to police every trouble spot in the world—and also for abandonment of the vanity that causes Americans to conceive their foreign policy in terms of fulfilling an idea or realizing a principle. Principles, of course, result in confrontations with unprincipled, self-seeking opponents as well as with forces pursuing other principles. Defense of the status quo can no longer be the principle of U.S. policy when new forces assert themselves in world politics. In so fluid a situation, any attempt to stem the tide could only result in defeat.

Kissinger's admirers, who apparently have not read his books, do him a disfavor by comparing him with Metternich, of whom he has written that *the brilliance of his per-*

⁴ "Structure of peace" is Kissinger's favorite expression. But structure is precisely the one guarantee that is missing in his conception of peace. Nixon's self-advertised "personal relationship with Brezhnev" is not much of a structure to rely on; nor is Henry's chummy reference to "my friend Le Duc Tho." The Nixon court may be Byzantine, but other nations no longer live with the *ancien régime*.

formance failed to conceal the futility of his effort. The real hero of Kissinger's book is Castelereagh, who knew how to roll with the punches, tried to reconcile France after the Napoleonic wars, kept Russia at bay, and furthered the Greek fight for liberation. Kissinger has specifically repudiated the idea of "balance of power"—or rather, the illusion that equilibrium is always stable or, when disturbed, adjusts itself. His own idea of détente is neither that of a blissful state of mind where one trusts that his partner is similarly innocent of bad intentions, nor that of unilateral abandonment of national goals; he rather sees it as a series of negotiations designed to remove points of friction or actual risks of conflict.

As a poli-scientist, Professor Kissinger has rejected the ideological rigidities of the Cold War and the academic conceptions of visionaries such as "global police," "collective security," or "balance of power." As a practical statesman, he wishes to follow an entirely pragmatic routine, meeting crises when they arise but not seeking confrontations, engaging the might of the United States only where necessary. To him détente means that you can have no preconceived idea about who will be your adversary or your friend in the next round.

But if détente is so uncertain, so precarious, and so elusive, why then does the U.S. government, press, and public proclaim it as the new way of international life? I believe that there are domestic as well as diplomatic reasons for advertising this new philosophy. Whether America "won" or "lost" the Cold War, it is indisputable that the dominant conception with which this country conducted the Cold War has not emerged triumphant. The United States must now face further losses of prestige, influence, and power. We can no longer play the role of international policeman and expect other nations to accept our solutions quasi-automatically. But, rather than a new policy, we are offered a new word; "détente"—an ideology where we need concretè relations.

Americans do, it seems, need a sense of mission if they are to support a policy. They marched into the Cold War under the banner of collective security; and whatever one's estimate of the bipolar system that reigned between 1945 and approximately 1965, one cannot deny that there was a conception of world politics and that it corresponded to the reality of power relations. It is the nature of the new policy that it provides no inspirational uplift. Retrenchment presupposes a sort of resignation; to endow it with virtue, Kissinger had to borrow an ideology from thinkers on foreign policy with whom he otherwise had nothing in common. "When conceptions are wanting, you can quickly invent a clever word," says Mephistopheles in Goethe's *Faust*. The word "détente" seems to be both reassuring and affirmative. It implies not only good faith on our part, but reasonableness on the other side, too. It seems to indicate that there is no danger any more in relaxing one's guard. This indeed is meant by those who take détente seriously as an ideology for their own conduct, which they would like to see adopted by the powers.

Isolationism may be a mistaken policy, but at least it was a clear conception of America's relationship to the world. Collective security may be utopian, but there can be no mistake about its meaning. Balance of Powers may be elusive or vulnerable, but at least it implies instructions to the policy-maker. Détente, on the contrary, is at best a code of good behavior; if mistaken for a policy, it is a source of confusion and danger. It endows our policy-makers (and those of others nations) with a halo of peacefulness and it is difficult to gainsay. For who could be against a policy that wraps itself in the mantle of peacefulness? But, basically, it is a philosophy of *laissez-faire*; it offers no positive framework for the organization of peace.

After many disappointing experiences, the American people understandably do not wish any longer to be responsible, with their

lives and money, for the maintenance of the status quo all over the world. They wish to "disengage" themselves from the many trouble spots in faraway countries. Why die for Diem and Thieu? Why guarantee Israel's frontier or the statute of Berlin? Even supposing that some of these causes are worthy, do they concern the man in Duluth?

As early as in his foreign-policy message of 1970, President Nixon warned that in each case of possible intervention the United States would "weigh its interests and the contribution of its allies." Moreover, he has specifically repudiated the ideologies on which the policy of the previous 33 years had been based—collective security and containment of the Communist advance. The United States will in the future try to maintain good relations with governments of all descriptions, and it will not intervene except where its own direct interests would be endangered. It no longer believes that peace is indivisible; instead of considering any change of the status quo anywhere as a threat to its own security, it defines its perimeter of defense unilaterally and makes unilateral decisions on when and where to intervene.

This policy, or the principle that inspires it, might be called disengagement in the sense of a refusal to be committed. But it has little to do with *détente*. Rather, it should be called unilateralism. We have seen recently how in the Mideast crisis the United States practices it, in antagonistic collusion with the Soviet Union, but in disregard of its allies. Yet this policy is justified by the philosophy of *détente*, which thereby is revealed to be a mere ideology, an illusion people think they are pursuing while world politics in reality proceeds as usual.

Disengagement as proposed by its devotees is first a policy renouncing military means in the pursuit of national aims. This means both the abolition of military means—for it is futile to display power and at the same time forswear its use—and the renun-

ciation of national goals—for it is futile to pursue goals one cannot secure without the means of power. The first requirement of a policy of true disengagement, therefore, would be renunciation of sovereignty, both militarily and politically, not to speak of economic interests. This is the opposite of isolationism. It requires strong international organs of distributive justice and, in their absence, machinery of regional security and arbitration.⁵ One cannot be "neutral" without being neutral "against" the more just cause or without being unfair to one side. In the recent Sinai war, the West German, Spanish, and Greek governments, in less than edifying unity, concealed their subservience to the oil interests by hypocritically proclaiming their "neutrality." While Soviet supply planes flew to Cairo over Yugoslavia at the rate of 15 per hour, U.S. ships to Israel were barred from most NATO ports. No matter what the merits of the European position in this case, I am using the example only to show that one cannot be neutral in a conflict involving others, especially if one side does not accept the doctrine of "business as usual."

To keep military engagement out of conflicts, there must be an engagement of other forces and institutions. *Détente* requires not a new isolationism but a new internationalism. The remedy against interventionism is not its abolition but a different kind of intervention. A nation that trades with so many others, invests its surplus capital and know-how in their development, and is concerned with their independence and well-being cannot pretend that it is doing nothing but watch peacefully. To admit our concern is the first step toward its right use.

The hypocrisy of *détentism* is the enemy of any real *détente*. *Détente* si, *détentism* no.

□

⁵ At this writing, the Chinese refuse to pay their share of U.N. peace-keeping operations; we may soon be back to 1964, when Adlai Stevenson tried to have the French and Russian memberships suspended for the same reason. Collective security suffered a severe setback when President Johnson failed to support this demand.

Are American Jews Turning to the Right?

The question persists. In both Jewish organizational and nonorganizational circles—Left, Right and Center, secularist and religious—there are tentative discussions, occasionally elated but mostly troubled: Has the traditional American Jewish commitment to liberalism been weakened in recent years? Are the Jews becoming more conservative as they grow more affluent? Or is it those Jews who are *not* affluent that become more conservative? And if such trends exist, what are we to make of them?

There has always been a small number of conservative Jewish intellectuals in America. A few write for the *National Review*; a few others, at the Jewish Theological Seminary, have been trying to work out a coherent conservative position. The influence of such people is small in general, smaller still within the Jewish world. Whatever conservatism there has been among American Jews has generally been indigenous and nonideological, rooted in sentiments of religious orthodoxy, and seldom requiring the ministrations of secular intellectuals. Similarly, there has been a Republican vote among American Jews, in the early years of this century a national majority, after the 1930s a decided minority. Whatever its social meaning, this vote has not seemed to require much intellectual justification.

The overwhelming thrust of Jewish thought and writing in America these past several decades has been liberal, notably

more so than in the population at large; and whatever radicalism we have had in America has found disproportionate support among Jews.

Now, some people say, all this is changing. But the evidence anyone can muster for (or against) this impression is very tentative. If a major change is indeed taking place, then we are in the midst of it—never a good vantage point for historical perspective. There are some signs of a rightward turn among Jewish intellectuals, but how extensive this is and, more important, to what extent it reflects widely based changes among American Jews is a matter for speculation.

One sign is the recent evolution of *Commentary*, which under the editorship of Norman Podhoretz, and with the help of Milton Himmelfarb, has been conducting a fierce campaign not only against the New Left (or its shattered remnants) but also against some of the ideas traditionally associated with socialism, social democracy, and even liberalism. Irritable and overreaching as this campaign has been, its thrust has thus far seemed not so much toward a conservative ideology as against recent versions of what Podhoretz takes to be vulgarizations of liberalism. What we have been witnessing here is a collective tightening-up of exradical Jewish intellectuals who wish to keep the liberal community within the centrist camp of such politicians as Hubert Humphrey and Scoop Jackson; who are impatient with proposals

for social changes that go much beyond the present limits of the welfare state; who have become skeptical about the possibility or desirability of governmental social action; and who are inclined to see connections between the left-liberal New Politics and the authoritarian excesses of the New Left. All this may be symptomatic of, or contribute to, a burgeoning Jewish conservatism but certainly does not yet comprise it. To what extent *Commentary* reflects growing sentiments within the Jewish community, or to what extent it runs counter to the dominant sentiments of that community, no one really seems to know.

The closest to a coherent effort at developing an ideology for a new Jewish conservatism is in the writings of Milton Himmelfarb—yet we are not quite certain that Himmelfarb himself would accept this designation, since one of the most curious aspects of his polemics is that, even while assaulting traditional liberal “fallacies,” he fiercely “defends” American Jews against charges that they have become less liberal. He betrays a touching, sometimes delicious ambivalence on this matter: as if to say, the liberals with their defense of quotas, their evasion of black anti-Semitism, their indifference to Jewish needs are poison for the Jews, yet don’t let me catch anyone suggesting that we aren’t as good liberals as we used to be. Himmelfarb has recently brought his writings together in a book, *The Jews of Modernity*, which merits the attention of anyone interested in these matters.¹

Still, it would be exaggerating to say that even he offers a sustained statement of Jewish conservatism. Perhaps all that “Jewish conservatism” consist of right now is a growing disillusionment with liberalism. Perhaps it will take another decade before a distinctive Jewish rationale for conservatism emerges. Meanwhile, it may not be presumptuous to offer a few summary points of the thrust toward a Jewish conservatism, as

these can be gleaned from Himmelfarb’s book, in *Commentary’s* pages, and elsewhere:

- The notion that Jews are by centuries-long tradition a people of liberal inclination is a parochial error, the consequence of ignorance of Jewish history. Before the Enlightenment, Jewish attitudes toward politics were essentially static, detached, and conservative.
- The argument that it is “good for the Jews” that they be on the side of social change is manifestly wrong or, at the least, much too simple. Anti-Semitism flourishes in most of the European Communist countries; it has been shown to be deeply entangled with radical ideologies; it took powerful hold of the New Left here and abroad. On the contrary: Jewish survival is closely dependent on social stability, order, and moderation.
- The “universalist” outlook of modern, secular, and progressivist Jews is a moral and practical disaster. It disarms the Jews as an ethnic group that must adjust itself to, and sometimes enter combat against, other ethnic groups. It is an outlook quick to offer sympathy to all other groups—blacks, Chicanos, Puerto Ricans, homosexuals, radical students—all except the Jews themselves, who are asked, in the name of their “traditions,” to make unreasonable and masochistic “sacrifices.”

Now, it would be mere polemical excess to deny that in this cluster of propositions one can find some nuggets of truth. The Communist countries have shown themselves to be hospitable to, and sometimes actively employing, anti-Semitism. “The Jewish tradition,” as an alleged foundation of liberalism, is a delusion since there are many and conflicting Jewish traditions, contemporary liberalism seems to have little genuine linkage with the “prophetic Judaism” it sometimes invokes, and most efforts to improvise such a linkage are mere frivolous conveniences. And there is good reason for dropping a certain kind of bleached uni-

¹ Milton Himmelfarb, *The Jews of Modernity* (New York: Basic Books, 1973).

versalism favored among “progressive” Jews in America. This much out of the way, let us now turn to an examination of some recent trends in American Jewish life that may prompt a drift toward conservatism.

That most American Jews are economically better off than heretofore in this century is a fact. Many of them have moved into the middle and upper-middle-class. The Jewish poor, “the other Jews” whose visibility is even lower than that of “the Other America,” are still with us, and estimates of their number steadily grow as they are rediscovered. The very rich, the Jewish millionaires, who were but a sliver before are no doubt a larger sliver now. But since World War II, there is no longer a proletarian majority even among immigrant Jews, and the bulk of the Jews in America is clearly middle-class, with a large proportion of professionals and academics. Most likely, American Jews feel a little more secure and less “peculiar” than ever before.

With upward mobility and a high degree of cultural assimilation has come a remarkable redefinition: Jews who constitute a tiny numerical group are increasingly taken to be part of the majority. The very novelty of this transformation of status can unnerve those who are its beneficiaries, and sometimes serves to veil still-painful disabilities to which Jews are subject, e.g., subtle kinds of economic and social discrimination. With the vicissitudes of their long history, the Jews have been prepared for almost anything but to be taken as part of the dominant “majority.” Perhaps this is a blessing prematurely bestowed.

At the same time—and surely, to one or another extent, because of their sense that they remain a group incompletely absorbed, one that never can be fully absorbed, into American society—the American Jews have persisted in their overwhelming commitment to political liberalism. When one comes to think of it, this is a remarkable fact. The

Jews seem to be the only ethnic community in the United States in which significant numbers of people, though they rise rapidly in socioeconomic condition, do not change—or at least until recently have not changed—their political views. A consistent, often intense alignment with liberalism characterizes the politics of American Jews since at least World War I, even, it should be stressed, when that alignment seems to threaten the immediate interests of some or many Jews. It is hardly a secret that the number of Jews active in liberal, protest, radical, and civil libertarian movements is highly disproportionate. Traditional sentiments play a stronger role here than social class, at least so far.

On what has this commitment to liberalism been based? On at least two factors: the powerful tradition of secular Jewish socialism, very strong in the earlier decades of the century, now fading but still felt and remembered, and sometimes affecting younger people who do not know the historical forces that are working upon them; and the premise, shared by many Jews for perhaps two centuries, that Jewish survival and interests are best served by an open society promoting social justice. The whole question of the supposed new conservatism among American Jews boils down to whether these factors, and others linked to them, still continue to operate.

But before turning to that question, we should note another basic fact about the life of American Jews, indeed, Jews in most parts of the world during the post-Holocaust years: it is a life inherently “schizoid.” At home, sharp improvements in condition, a leap forward socially, economically. Internationally, the greatest horror in human history, the extermination of six million Jews, with consequent feelings of guilt, fright, shame, and sentiments of apocalypse. How can these two elements of Jewish experience be reconciled? They cannot; and anyone who feels the slightest sense of Jewish identity

must live with this doubleness as best he can. It is easy to sneer at affluent Jews who go to their expensive Community Center to hear lectures on the Holocaust; but it is cheap and foolish to sneer at them, for whatever may seem discordant in their behavior is also discordant in the behavior of everyone else. Nor should it be supposed that "ordinary Jews" who go about their daily life, running their businesses or working at their professions, have forgotten the Holocaust. Perhaps their children have, but *they* have not. What to do or say about the Holocaust they hardly know, any more than do the rest of us; but the stubborn if residual attachment they show to Jewish "identification," their readiness to contribute large amounts of money to an astonishing variety of Jewish causes and agencies shows that they still retain a stabbing awareness of what the nature of this century has been. They remain "sensitive"—and why should they not?—to the faintest intimations of attack, and they feel that their security is always shadowed by the recurrent possibility of attack.

III

Several motifs can be isolated in the drift, insofar as there is one, toward Jewish conservatism:

(1) *THERE IS* a growing feeling—but still, as we have suggested, qualified by historical memory—that Jewish life in America is reasonably secure, or at least *as secure as Jewish life ever can be*. Hence, it may be supposed, there follows or will in time follow a gradual decline in the felt urgency of American Jews to transcend narrow class interests and respond to universalist moral appeals. By now the Jewish middle and upper middle classes are no longer a step away from immigrant parents and grandparents; they are two or three steps away. Rightly or wrongly, many Jews seem inclined to feel more and more "at home" in the United States; the messianic strand of Jewish sen-

sibility (despite a remarkable outbreak in the New Left) keeps dimming within the mainstream of Jewish institutional life; the idea of *galut*, or exile, comes to be abstract, ideological, merely literary; and thereby the conclusion may be cultivated that Jews should start enjoying the luxury of responding to political events more and more "like ordinary Americans," that is, in accord with their individual socioeconomic, or class, interests. At the time of the last presidential election, it was said that some of the Jews switching to Nixon who justified their stand—it had, be it noted, still to be *justified*—in the name of Israeli security were "really" alarmed by the possibility that McGovern, if elected, would raise their taxes. How can one test such a proposition? How can one know that appeals to Jewish interest are "merely" a veil for a drift into affluent conservatism? And, for that matter, why must one choose?—since it seems likely that both motives operated together, in an all but inextricable mixture of group solidarity and personal interest.

The trend we are discussing here is, at most, a long-range one, and before it could be established as a reality, there would have to be maintained in the coming few elections the moderate Jewish shift toward the Republicans, as well as evidence offered that this shift has been particularly strong among wealthy Jews. Those who stress the likelihood that such a trend is taking shape feel that the Jews will not long continue to be an ethnic group that responds more to moral-universalistic appeals than to perceptions of class or group interest. But at least one major complication should be noted: the disproportionate number of Jews concentrated in the professions, academic life, and the communications industries (influential in national life if not always within the Jewish community) tend to remain committed to liberal and universalistic values.² They don't,

² Add to this complication still another: it is pre-

as a rule, see their "class interests" as being linked with the political Right; indeed, they like to think they are superior to considerations of "class interest." And they don't respond very much to appeals, whether authentic or spurious, for Jewish solidarity.

If, then, the drift toward becoming more "like the others" continues—and to an undeterminable extent, we believe there is such a drift—then the rise of an influential segment of Jewish professionals and academics may help retard it.

(2) TOGETHER WITH this drift toward becoming more "like the others," and surely to some extent for linked reasons, there has also taken place a slow but inexorable decline of the Jewish labor movement. The consequences for Jewish life in America, and also, by the way, for socialists in America, are enormous.

Once an inspiring force for radical and secularist sentiment, the Jewish unions have become more moderate, sometimes conservative, with the passage of the years. A good number of them remain Jewish only at the level of their top leadership: thin layers of social democratic veterans. Few, if any, of the Jewish unions still have a majority of Jewish members: it is estimated, for instance, that less than 20 percent of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers' membership remains Jewish. Within a decade or two, such unions as the ACW and the ILGWU will have to undergo extreme transformations in leadership and sociopolitical orientation. The Jewish working class is shrinking, aging, dying off, losing its élan. Some Jewish

labor groups seem more responsive to injustices in the Soviet Union than injustices at home: on certain issues the American Jewish Committee, once the stronghold of conservative German Jews, now takes a more liberal position than the Jewish Labor Committee, which reflects the views of the leaders of the Jewish garment unions.

In short, the traditional Jewish social democracy is leaving the scene and, with it, the Yiddishist-secularist tradition. The loss will be, already is, enormous—for the Jewish world, for whatever remains of American socialism, perhaps for intellectual life. Young people who experience vague yearnings to discover a "Jewish identity" are now rarely inclined to turn toward Jewish socialism or Jewish unionism, both of which have lost a good part of their vitality; they turn elsewhere, to religious improvisations, communal experiments, quasi-Hasidic retreats, a renewed interest in East European Jewish life.

And because the Jewish social democracy keeps fading, both in numbers and intensity, there occurs within the Jewish community a growth in the relative strength of Jewish orthodoxy, for by contrast the religious minority (e.g., the Hasidim in Brooklyn) retains some coherence, some passion, some strength of conviction. Politically, this often leads toward a reinforcement of conservative tendencies within the Jewish world.

(3) THE PREVIOUS TWO TRENDS operate over an extended period of time, and if they have recently been felt more keenly in Jewish life, it is partly because of an accumulation of their effects and partly because more immediate causes of the conservative drift tend to bring these effects into play. For the last six or seven years a body of sentiment has been growing among many American Jews, especially those living in large cities such as New York and Philadelphia, that if, within the relative security of American life,

cisely the Jewish visibility in the professions, academic life, and the communications industry that makes a good many Jews nervous. There is a feeling that such people are vulnerable to social and cultural attack because of gentile resentment of Jewish "control" of cultural life and from insurgent blacks trying to replace Jewish teachers by undermining the merit principle etc. The possibilities here are explosive.

there is indeed a threat to Jewish well-being, it comes mainly from below. Or, to be blunt about it, this threat comes from urban blacks who in the schools, a few industries, and some unions are pressing to undo Jewish positions and accomplishments—pressing, especially, to undermine the merit system that has made possible Jewish positions and accomplishments.

The possibility of black anti-Semitism has startled American Jews. If they know their past at all, they know about peasants, workers, and the lower orders being stirred up to commit pogroms. Cossacks, peasants in their rural idiocy, workers without consciousness, a mass of ignoramuses: these the higher-ups could manipulate to make the Jews into a scapegoat. That a similar process of manipulation, rage, and befuddlement could occur among American blacks did not seem, until recently, a conceivable course.

The American Negroes have served as a kind of buffer for American Jews. So long as deep-seated native resentments and hatreds were taken out primarily on blacks, they were less likely to be taken out on Jews. If Jews have been the great obsession of Christianity, blacks have been the great obsession of America. And as long as this condition obtained, both organized and spontaneous haters in America concentrated on blacks, and only secondarily on Jews. In no other country can we find quite this configuration.

Had Jews felt themselves to be part of “the white majority” and had they followed a mere crude calculus of self-interest, they might have joined other whites in holding nonwhites down. A few Jews did, of course, but the majority set itself up as an ally of the blacks, at times just about the only stable ally they had. Jews whose collective imagery was filled with the time they were “slaves unto Pharaoh in Egypt” could sympathize with former slaves in the New World. Smarting under prejudice themselves, often committed to radical and universalist goals, feeling a kinship—if sometimes a rather ab-

stract one—with oppressed blacks, the Jews shared in the fight for civil rights.

The civil rights movement, as it arose in the 1960s, had exceptionally variegated components. At its height, organized labor, Catholic and Protestant church leaders, idealistic youth, and a liberal Administration coalesced around the person of Martin Luther King and his principles of nonviolence. At this time the Negro-Jewish partnership was closest. Jews who had “made it” set out to help blacks who had not.

As Southern segregation crumbled, blacks poured into Northern ghettos where they soon ran up against a complex of thus far unsolved problems: the backlash of neighboring white ethnic groups; the social-cultural traumas of adjusting to urban life; the economic deprivations of ghetto life in the North; and, perhaps most of all, the shock of discovering that they remained, even after their recent victories, a group still discriminated against, still suffering internal disruption and pathology, still overwhelmed by a heritage of centuries of oppression.

King lived to hear himself hissed by his own comrades, derided as “de Lawd,” put down as an Uncle Tom. Black power, black separatism, black nationalism were growing before his assassination, but that event dramatized the end of integration as a common goal of American blacks. Thereupon the Negro-Jewish alliance approached collapse. The “Black Revolution,” stronger in subjective expressiveness than objective results, expelled whites from its ranks. Very often that meant Jews.

Brewton Berry, a sociologist who specializes in race relations, remarks that

On the one hand, the Jews are a notoriously [sic] liberal group, harboring less anti-Negro feeling than gentiles. . . . Negroes, for their part, have often expressed a great admiration for the Jews, and frankly envy them their success in overcoming the obstacles which have been placed in their path.

On the other hand, continues Berry,

Anti-Semitism among Negroes has recently become a matter of some concern. It has been especially virulent in the cities of the North. . . . Negroes have engaged in boycotts of Jewish establishments, have disseminated anti-Semitic propaganda, have published vicious sheets like *Dynamite* and *Negro Youth*. . . . [—Brewton Berry, *Race and Ethnic Relations* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1965), p. 355.]

How widespread this anti-Semitism has been in the black community remains a question, indeed, a crucial question. No one seems to know with any exactitude, though some recent studies indicate it is less widespread among blacks than among white gentiles. But it is beyond question that anti-Semitism has appeared at least on the more “radical” fringes of some black movements, among the Black Panthers and groups dedicated to “Third World Solidarity.” Even our Jerry Rubins and Abbie Hoffmans, who professed their allegiance to El Fatah, have been rejected as “Zionists” by the Panthers—though they, as Marie Syrkin has pointed out, earned that designation as little as did the Polish Jewish Communists who were expelled from the party.

Soon enough, a number of American Jews would begin to emulate the blacks. If black is beautiful, Jewish would be exquisite. The Pandora’s box of ethnicity was opened wide, for good and/or bad. Lower-class Jews found allies in portions of the organizational Jewish intelligentsia, the rabbinate, and chauvinist ideologues—all together to proclaim an ethnic consciousness that fell easily enough into a *ressentiment* conducive to hostility or at least suspicion of other groups.

It is crucial to note that many American Jews still *feel* like losers, and being able to buy a private home, or send kids to college, or move into a suburb isn’t quickly going to remove that feeling. Black antagonism—whether deep-rooted or, as seems more probable, the verbal upchuck of an enraged fringe—is linked in their minds with global anti-Semitism and the enmity of Arabs to-

ward Israel. Personal fright on the streets, poor public schools, a meritocracy in decline—all merge psychically with the precariousness of Israel and the mortification of Soviet Jewry. Who can easily separate in such reactions the warranted concern from the “paranoid” excess?

With such fears there go urgent and painful, but completely real, problems of social friction between adjacent black and Jewish communities, the latter almost always composed of older and poorer Jews less inclined to articulate liberalism and more concerned with group survival and personal safety.

Consider, for just a moment, the problem of crime. Jews, as well as other whites, tend by now to see it as linked to the problem of blacks. That much of the crime among black youth is related to the pathology of drugs—and also, perhaps, to the rage that followed upon the discovery that the revolution of rising expectations would not be followed by a revolution of rising gratifications; that most of the victims of black crimes are themselves black; that, in some distorted way, even the ability to release this rage in antisocial acts indicates a gradual psychic freeing of blacks from earlier postures of submissiveness (though at great cost to both their immediate possibilities and their inner morale); that pathologies in the black community constitute a price for historical injustices such as no other group in America has ever had to pay—all this is true, important, urgent.

But it provides no immediate answer—perhaps none can be had—to the aging or retired Jewish garment worker or small shopkeeper in Crown Heights or the Bronx who is terribly frightened of being mugged, and often with good reason. One result is the rise of such demagogic types as Jerry Birbach, the redneck who inflamed every sensitive Jewish nerve in the Forest Hills struggle of 1972. Another result is a visible and distressing decline of sympathetic feeling among Jews toward the blacks—in some instances

it almost seems as if the outbreak of marginal anti-Semitism among blacks serves as an occasion, or pretext, for the withdrawal of social generosity.

The painfulness of this problem is almost beyond imagining. Can we be indifferent to the agonies of blacks in this moment of transition? Can we be indifferent to the fears of Jews side-swiped in the course of that transition? And can we suppose that even the most humane and judicious consideration of all the elements in this clash could possibly lead to a quick and easy solution? The one thing it seems crucial to say is that such problems cannot be solved by local measures, though they may be eased by them or aggravated (as they sometimes were by the Lindsay administration, in its occasional high-minded ineptitude). What brings blacks and poor Jews into conflict is a combination of social difficulties as these rub painfully against both groups: difficulties ranging from bitter competition over scarce housing to enraged confrontations in poor schools. And these social difficulties can be removed, or at least significantly diminished, only through the kinds of large-scale measures that presuppose federal action. Of that, we have no signs.

It therefore seems likely that those Jews still trapped in poor or semislum neighborhoods will react to their fears by turning, especially in local elections, toward figures like Abe Beame—not toward ideological conservatives but simply mediocre politicians who promise what they probably will not be able to deliver: a return to earlier conditions of festering calm.

(4) **DISENCHANTMENT** over Communist anti-Semitism both in Russia and the East European countries has, for a segment of the older, "progressive-minded" or fellow-traveling Jews, been traumatic. If this has not led directly to conservative ideas, it has certainly encouraged conservative moods. For many

in the once-influential segment of Yiddish-speaking workers in or close to the Stalinist movement, the series of events that begins with the Moscow Trials, continues through the Hitler-Stalin pact, and ends with the harassment of Jews who wish to emigrate from the Soviet Union—this series of events has had a chilling impact comparable to the dismay and disorientation that beset East European Jews in the 18th century after the collapse of the false messianic movements of Sabbatai Zevi and Jacob Frank. Intensifying such responses has been the flirtation of a portion of the New Left with Arab terrorism: it takes no great powers of imagination to conjure up the feelings of Jews when they see Jewish students collecting funds for El Fatah! As for those Jews who never were in or near the radical milieu, Soviet anti-Semitism often brings about a generalized revulsion against all forms of radicalism, perhaps even liberalism. The '60s were not a decade that encouraged the making of distinctions.

(5) **AMERICAN JEWS**, apart from minuscule fringe groups, feel a deep involvement with Israel: this holds true for conservatives and socialists, believers and secularists, assimilationists and Yiddishists. Israel, they feel, is the one glory salvaged from a century of horror. And even Jews critical of Israel on one or another count, as we are, strongly share this feeling—a feeling the Yom Kippur war made seem only more urgent.

Yet the paradox that must be recognized is that insofar as Israel functions—must function—as a state dealing with other states, its impact upon American Jews is—perhaps must be—conservative. That the Israeli government is a laborite government, and that its prime minister attends conferences of the Socialist International, does not significantly change things. What we are talking about is political necessity, at least necessity as the leaders of Israel make their calculations for survival: it has little or nothing

to do with the sentiments of Golda Meir or anyone else.

The Israelis, concerned primarily with their survival—and who is to tell them they are wrong?—find it necessary, as a state, to take a “pragmatic” attitude toward international arrangements of power. They feel, in effect, that their survival depends on American help; they have received, thus far, significant help from the Nixon administration; they were ready to pay for this help with declarations supporting the American role in Vietnam, some merely *pro forma* but others arising out of a “tough-minded” *Weltanschauung* that some Israeli figures, both in and out of the government, have begun to adopt.

Some American Jews now ask not, “Is it good for the Jews?” but, “Is it good for Israel?” Such people worried about Nixon’s abandonment of Taiwan, not because they admired Chiang Kai-shek but because they feared it might presage abandonment of Israel—perhaps as part of an overall retreat to “isolationism” or, what is more likely, an effort to strike a deal with the oil-producing Arab countries.

It is betraying no secrets to report that in 1972 intimations came from at least some Israeli officials: “Nixon is our friend and we want him to remain in office. Nothing matters more to us than military aid from the U.S. We ask you, as supporters of Israel, to subordinate any other concern.” How many Jews, either within or, more important, apart from the declining Zionist movement, responded to such intimations we cannot say; indeed, we have the impression that some Jews acted in accord with this position *without needing to be told* that it was held by influential Israelis. (To complicate matters, there were Israelis who winked approval of Jewish intellectuals supporting McGovern: perhaps out of genuine sympathy, perhaps out of embarrassment, perhaps to hedge their bets.)

When the Israeli ambassador in Washington made his political preferences a lit-

tle too clear, he was admonished to stop by important American Jewish leaders. They feared his actions might be taken as gratuitous interference in domestic affairs. They may also have thought those actions would be counterproductive: Golda Meir’s *sotto voce* endorsement of Nixon (bestowed upon him in this surreal world together with those of Mao and Brezhnev) might hurt his chances of winning . . . or reinforce suspicions of “dual loyalty.”

IN THIS COMPLEX OF CIRCUMSTANCES, American Jews could hardly avoid being torn by fierce tensions. Although only a tiny fraction belongs to the Zionist movement, Jews are, mostly, post-hoc Zionists in some loose way. Except for a small minority of zealots, most American Jews who reflect upon such matters are quite prepared to recognize the possibility that serious conflicts may arise between their concern for Israel (which, if more than quixotic, *must* take into account its *Realpolitik* calculations) and their interests as Jews in America and American citizens.³ Indeed, some of the Zionist leaders themselves recognize the probability of an *inherent* clash between a state and the universalistic movement (Zionism) attached to yet distinct from it.

The obligation to defend Israel collides with an equal obligation to maintain a certain distance from Israeli policy, lest Jews, Zionist or not, look a little like those Ameri-

³ A small, not at all world-shaking example. In early 1973 Frank Fitzsimmons, head of the Teamsters Union, was given a banquet for having raised \$26 million for Israel. We are not the ones to sneeze at \$26 million. As a rule, we’d say—well, if they want to give that unsavory character a banquet for raising \$26 million, what the hell—it’s only a banquet. But at this *particular* moment, at least some Jews, including the present authors, have another interest. We are supporters of Cesar Chavez’s Farm Workers Union, and that union is threatened with destruction by a brutal raid from Fitzsimmons’s Teamsters Union. We don’t want, insofar as California is concerned, to honor Fitzsimmons in any way; we recognize, insofar as Israel is concerned, that there may be a need for this ritual ceremony. So?

can Communists who never deviate from the Kremlin line. Zionism, to be sure, was never close to being monolithic; its fractiousness is reflected every day in the Knesset. Yet there remain the realities of statecraft, and these evidently clash with the Labor Zionist ideology.

Speaking of this situation, Judah Shapiro, a leader of American Labor Zionism, has remarked that two major consequences follow for American Zionism from its close identification with the State of Israel:

1. pragmatism and consensus replaced ideology and polemic;
2. the instrumentality for raising funds also became the arbiter for the allocation of funds; philosophies and programs became beneficiaries and pleaders; fund-raisers and large contributors became governors and leaders. [—Judah Shapiro, "The Assignment Was the Future," *Jewish Frontier*, December 1972.]

This is diplomatically put, but it makes the point. Within the American Jewish world, the full-time fund-raiser and the *nouveau riche* donor swing a lot of weight, maybe more than old Labor Zionist comrades who did not go to Israel. . . . There follows a certain depoliticization of organized Jewish life in America, a weakening not only of Zionism or Labor Zionism but of *all* movements and causes. (This process, be it noted in passing, is of considerable duration, going back to a decision by Ben Gurion to weaken the position of Zionists in the West vis à vis those who were running the state of Israel.) And insofar as this signals a banking of old fires, the atmosphere of American Jewish life becomes a little more amenable, if not to ideological conservatism then to moods, compromises, resignations that serve as well.

The problem is galling. Some of us who are warm supporters of Israel had to say in 1972: "We are going to vote for McGovern because we think it would be best for the

United States if he defeated Nixon [there seems recently to have accumulated a certain amount of evidence for this view] and because we also think that a McGovern victory will not harm Israel." On the first of these propositions, Israelis might not care to argue; on the second, the skepticism some had about our judgment was not simply to be dismissed. Politics is hard.

It is only natural, in trying to estimate a Jewish drift toward conservatism, to turn to election results; but these prove to be uncertain and contradictory in character, perhaps because elections cannot be assumed to be precise registers of political sentiment and perhaps because Jewish political attitudes have become uncertain and contradictory.

Since 1966 is alleged to have been a turning point, let us go back to that year. What happened in 1966, "experts" keep saying, is that 55 percent of New York's Jews voted in a referendum, initiated by the Police-man's Benevolent Association, against Mayor Lindsay's newly created Civilian Review Board. This conclusion is based on a competent study by three political scientists, David W. Abbot, Louis H. Gold, and Edward T. Rogowsky. It is *not*, however, a study of how New York Jews voted. It is a comparative study of how Brooklyn Jews and Catholics, excluding Puerto Ricans, voted. This report was effusively praised by Daniel P. Moynihan in a foreword in which he could not refrain from gloating over a major liberal setback.

To left-liberal or radical Jews, as to civil libertarians, reflection on that setback is bound to be depressing. Proponents of a civilian review board considered it a channel through which blacks and Puerto Ricans might register their complaints against police brutality:

The opponents of civilian review were organized in a coalition—Independent Citizens

Committee Against Review Boards—dominated by the PBA. Its other constituents were the Conservative Party, American Legion Posts, parents' and taxpayers' groups, the Brooklyn Bar Association, and the John Birch Society. Support for the board came from an impressive number of civic, labor, civil rights, and religious groups, organized into the Federated Associations for Impartial Review (FAIR), directed largely by the New York Civil Liberties Union and volunteers. [—Abbot, Gold & Rogowsky, *Police, Politics and Race* (New York: American Jewish Committee, 1969), p. 7.]

Then 63 percent, or 1,313,161, voted against the board and 765,468 for it. In the Brooklyn sample of 374 whites who were interviewed, the religious breakdown was as follows: Protestant, 70.6; Catholic, 83.1; Jewish, 55.1.

Among Catholics, ethnic extraction, education, and occupation were weak indicators of CRB sentiment, whereas among Jews both education and occupation appeared to be equally potent. Highly educated Jewish professionals overwhelmingly supported CRB, while poorly educated lower-class Jewish workers strongly opposed it.

We have no reason to doubt the validity of these findings; they dovetail with other, softer data that have the look of reliability. Sam Yorty's victory over Tom Bradley in Los Angeles (reversed in 1973, with Jewish districts now giving strong support to Bradley) and Carl Stenvig's victory in Minneapolis in 1969 lend some credence to the idea of a conservative Jewish trend. So does the 1969 New York mayoral election where two right-wingers, Mario Procaccino and John Marchi, got three votes for every two given Lindsay. In 1971, tough and reactionary Frank Rizzo became mayor of Philadelphia. Here too we have a small-scale study, by Henry Cohen and Gary Sandrow, two investigators who did their best and admit it is inadequate:

The available data are limited in scope and accuracy. First, in some parts of the city no

predominantly Jewish division could be found. Second, the most recent Jewish population survey is over three years old, and was never meant to be definitive or rigorously accurate. And finally, the U.S. Census Bureau has not yet released the 1970 figures on income and age.

All of which throws some light on the pitfalls of such research.

Nevertheless, the Philadelphia story, insofar as Cohen and Sandrow can reconstruct it, is the Los Angeles and New York story all over again. The Jewish vote split along class lines, with lower income groups going mainly for Rizzo and upper income groups for his liberal Republican opponent. The Jews did not elect Rizzo; whites *in toto* voted around two to one for him; whereas Jews divided about 50:50 between Rizzo and his opponent. Cohen and Sandrow conclude:

Jewish voters did not rush to Rizzo as did more than two out of every three non-Jewish white voters in Philadelphia; they voted for and against him in approximately even numbers. But that was not good enough for those who expected Jews—and *Jews alone*—to remain unaffected by the law-and-order issue [Emphasis added]. [—Henry Cohen and Gary Sandrow, *Philadelphia Chooses a Mayor, 1971* (New York: American Jewish Committee, 1972), p. 9.]

On the other hand, Cohen and Sandrow quote a Jewish leader in the 63rd Ward who had rather different expectations. Confessing that despite his efforts 60 percent of the Jews in that ward voted against Rizzo, he remarked: "Thank God for the *goyim*. I'm thoroughly ashamed of our Jews."

How American Jews voted in the last presidential election and in the congressional races is still an unassembled jigsaw puzzle. The polls did consistently show that neither presidential candidate was personally appealing to the voters, only 55 percent of them bothering to vote at all. American Jews ordinarily vote in greater numbers than do

other citizens, but there is reason to believe that in 1972 larger numbers of them stayed away from the polls than in earlier years. By the best estimates, however, Jews remained second only to blacks in their support of McGovern. By the same estimates there was a drop in the Jewish Democratic vote of about 15 to 17 percent between 1968 to 1972. Why? McGovern's alleged "isolationism" or his record on Israel; the signals from some Israelis; the appearance of a tiny but influential segment of very rich Jews in the Nixon camp; the defection of the labor movement from McGovern (though the Jewish garment unions, perhaps responding to their large black and Puerto Rican memberships, endorsed McGovern); the McGovern position on taxes; the kind of chic celebrities who supported McGovern and could be identified by middle- or lower-class Jews as the kind who had supported Lindsay; the appearance of a group of Jewish intellectuals, mostly exradical, who supported Nixon on the bizzare ground that he was the more "prudent" of the two candidates—take your pick. All probably counted as contributing factors, but what no one knows is the relative weights to assign to them. It does seem clear, however, that the slippage in the Jewish Democratic vote was centered in the poorer, less-educated, and more religious urban segments. So there is at least a mini-trend.

At this point it would be well to acknowledge some anomalies, perhaps confusions. If it is true that in the main the wealthier, better-educated Jews are those who vote liberal most heavily, what then happens to the view suggested earlier in this essay, that the process of settling into American affluence may gradually undermine the traditional Jewish commitment to liberalism? And for that matter, if it is the wealthier and better-educated Jews who vote liberal, then, since Jews are by and large becoming both more affluent and better-educated, it ought to follow that the Jews as a whole are also becoming more liberal.

Perhaps one difficulty in such entanglements has to do with the phrase "more liberal." Such a phrase has no single, precise meaning, only a cluster of imprecise and at times contradictory meanings. Perhaps, while the majority of Jews remain committed to liberalism, it is to a liberalism increasingly "moderate" and conservatized, the kind represented by Senator Jackson rather than by Senator McGovern. It may be that while the general commitment to liberalism persists, the intensity with which it is held or the readiness to expend energy and experience inconvenience in its behalf gradually declines. And it may also be that while the Jewish middle class together with Jewish professionals and academics still vote regularly for liberal candidates, a small but crucial fraction of these groups is breaking away and turning to the Right, perhaps as a portent of things to come. Impressionistically, all of these seem to us likelihoods and thereby possible ways of coping with the difficulties we have just noted.

Within the Jewish world narrowly conceived, that is, within the Jewish organizational world, the theme of a possible upsurge of conservatism is often debated with regard to two problems: quotas and "parochialism." Let us glance, much too briefly, at each of these.

No issue or phrase is more likely to stir fears and anxieties among self-aware Jews than quotas: it rouses memories of exclusion from European cities and schools; it rouses memories of how hard it was for Jewish boys in America to enter medical schools. The rejection of quotas as a means of *holding down* minorities and the espousal of the merit principle according to which individuals are judged by their competence or potential, regardless of race or color—this is correct in principle, and we reaffirm it without qualification. But the application of correct principles can sometimes be very diffi-

cult, and men of good will can differ as to how it should be done. The difficulty at the moment is that quotas and "affirmative action" programs take on a new context: an effort to *help* minority groups, sometimes in disregard of the merit principle and sometimes, it is alleged, in order to realize the merit principle. The issue merits a full-scale examination, not possible here; we have no fixed or pat formula; we recommend an excellent article by Leonard Fein in *Midstream*, March 1973. Meanwhile, a few observations:

- In discussing quotas and "affirmative action," we must avoid the rhetoric of either/or. Simply to denounce quotas, and say no more, is to disregard the claims and sensibilities of black spokesmen and black colleagues.
- Simply to attack quotas is to disregard, as well, the urgent and often justified feelings of minority groups that the entrenched systems of seniority in factories, and of recruitment of students and faculties in universities, are often discriminatory in practice, even though veiled by the claims of merit. So the issue is not merit vs. antimerit, but in actuality complex weighings of many factors.
- Merit is indeed a major principle, but it is not the only one. Justice, equity, recompense, minority rights: these also count. And let us remember that in a highly competitive society, like ours, it is the people on top who are most inclined to find the principle of merit a social convenience, for they are persuaded, of course, that their dominance is a consequence of merit. Tragedy occurs when two sets of standards, merit on the one hand, equity on the other, come into conflict.
- There are many situations with regard to jobs, promotions, status, etc., in which merit may be close to irrelevant, since the distribution of goods takes place, properly enough, according to other criteria.

- We have every reason to stress the differences between "affirmative action," which on the face of it merely requires universities to make special efforts to increase the number of black or female faculty members, and quotas, which set a fixed number for such an increase. To be sure, "affirmative action" can easily slide into quota, and thereby become objectionable; but sympathetic and sophisticated faculty people will take the "affirmative action" idea at face value and not simply dismiss it on the ground that it is "really" a quota.

- To what extent has "affirmative action" seriously damaged Jewish (or non-Jewish white) faculty members? The evidence is spotty and inconclusive. Paradoxically enough, it seems likely that Jewish women have profited from "affirmative action," since they comprise a rather large proportion of those academic women who have suffered discrimination. Some of the evidence brought against "affirmative action" in *Commentary* consists of absurd literalisms put forward in its name, such as an announcement that a college is looking for a black scholar to teach Hebrew. These are either a result of stupidity or of a not-so-clever attempt to discredit the whole idea. Nevertheless, it seems likely that some younger Jewish scholars have been hurt, and others may continue to be hurt, by "affirmative action."

- It is said in some quarters that black insistence on quotas or "affirmative action," when it occurs, constitutes a tacit admission that blacks cannot now compete in the universities or elsewhere on the basis of merit, or at least that not many or enough of them can. Perhaps; but to insist upon this point is to speak to black colleagues in the name of some pure realm of merit, whereas they see a decidedly impure reality in which merit has been far from dominant. And if, indeed, black spokesmen are making an admission of particularly acute difficulties, then that should prompt particularly acute kinds of help.

- There is the further fact that a formal defense of equality of opportunity can perpetuate extreme inequalities of condition, if only because of the radically different points from which competing social and racial groups start out. A hierarchy of merit, real or alleged, can end up being almost as offensive as a hierarchy of caste or status.

- Yet there is very serious ground for being disturbed by the slippage—in some instances, much worse—of academic standards in the universities which, while not caused by “affirmative action,” is to some indeterminable extent encouraged by it. There is reason to be disturbed as Jews, as academics, as citizens. Black students obviously merit special consideration and need special help; but systematically to expect less of them than of white students, systematically to install a double standard of judgment is surely not to do them a service. The same holds for black faculty members.

The question, then, becomes whether it is possible to compensate for an appalling history of outrage by giving blacks greater opportunities, more of the “breaks” (and in a way that is what “affirmative action” means or should mean) while at the same time holding in general to the value of merit. It would be fatuous to suppose that this is always possible, and in a given instance, it may be necessary to make painful choices. The situation is one that requires a complicated balancing of values that are sometimes in conflict.

- Leonard Fein, in the above-mentioned article, describes an historical incident in which Histadrut, the labor federation of Israel, used a quota system—it would appear, then, that the Jewish position on this matter has not been so inflexible after all, or more to the point, that there has been no single Jewish position. Word now comes to us from Israel that the ruling Labor party has recently put into effect a variety of quotas for its electoral candidates—25 percent women, 20 percent under 35, 33 percent Jews from

Moslem countries. Speaking in behalf of the quota for women, Golda Meïr said:

In a free egalitarian society, there should be no need for a legal defense of the woman’s position. Her place should be achieved on merit only, irrespective of sex. But in view of the present reality, better be ashamed that we have to pass such rulings than not pass them. [—Cited in *John Herling’s Newsletter*, Sept. 4, 1973.]

That this version of the quota system is used in Israel does not, of course, necessarily make it right; but at the least it ought to subdue the rhetoric of those in America who have made opposition to quotas into a symbol of Jewish self-respect.

THE INWARD TURN of at least a segment of the Jewish community, with the attendant slogan, “let’s take care of our own,” is paralleled by similar turns among both white and black ethnic groups; and except for apostles of abstract internationalism (Jews who often find it possible to praise the ethnicity of all groups but their own), few commentators would be foolish enough to celebrate or denounce such a turn without qualification. There is, among the Jews, the complex inward turn of a thinker like Ben Halpern and the simplistic inward turn of a demagogue like Meier Kahane. There are those who say that, while remaining faithful to the tradition of universalist justice, they feel it necessary to emphasize Jewish rights at a time when these are threatened at certain points and systematically scoffed at by young “progressivist” Jews; and there are those who say that all the talk about universalist justice is rubbish, and that the Jews have to fight for their own turf.

The trend toward particularism in the Jewish world has already encountered some powerful critics. Dr. Nahum Goldman, head of the World Jewish Congress,

warned that Jews, having become prosperous and influential in the world, are in

danger of forgetting their timeless Jewish ideals . . . the tendencies [he said] which are developing, especially within American Jewry, which would have the Jewish people limit its problems and activities for its own benefit and which renounces the universal character of our national and religious ideals, are an indication of the dangers. . . . [—Jewish Telegraphic Agency, July 6, 1973.]

What Dr. Goldman says comes from on high, and within Israeli politics he leans toward the center-right; it takes more courage to say the same thing in Forest Hills, Jerry Birbach country. Rabbi Ben Zion Bokser, who heads the Forest Hills Jewish Center, has called for a revival of the “messianic vision” and has attacked ethnic isolationism, citing a lovely apothegm from the Hasidic Rabbi Nahman of Bratzlav:

Each person suffers pain according to the condition of his soul and the level of his service to God. There is one who knows pain only because of his children, his parent, or his neighbor; another, of a higher state, suffers pain because of the whole city; but there is one of a very high state who suffers pain because of the troubles of the whole world. [—Ben Zion Bokser, “Jewish Universalism & Jewish Parochialism,” *Congress Bi-Weekly*, Nov. 24, 1972.]

So the issues are joined: in symbolic shorthand, Bokser confronting Birbach,

disent

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with a spectrum of uncertainty, confusion, and mixed feeling between them. That significant trends within American Jewish life bespeak a conservative turn seems indisputable. That these trends are as yet decisive, or even dominant, seems unlikely. Probably, we are witnessing a regrouping of forces and ideas within the Jewish world that will bring into existence a stronger conservative wing, which will in time enable the emergence of a conservative Jewish intelligentsia. If Milton Himmelfarb can be patient, he is likely to find a growing number of allies. Certainly, we are witnessing a regrouping of forces within the Jewish world, which will result in a conservatizing of its dominant liberalism.

YET THE LIBERAL-LEFT OUTLOOK remains strong among American Jews. (To provide another New York example: a majority of the voters for Herman Badillo in the 1973 Democratic primary was Jewish.) If those who adhere to the values and ideas of the liberal-left show renewed energy, it may well be able to retain a powerful and perhaps dominant position in the Jewish community. There are factors in Jewish life—not merely sentiments and attachments—which encourage the liberal-left. Were the tradition of social activism to be abandoned or seriously weakened, one result would be a very severe identity crisis among nonreligious yet “Jewish” Jews. For the Orthodox, nothing is finally crucial except an unbreakable tie with God: that defines them as Jews. But for many others, from Conservative rabbis to socialist intellectuals, being Jewish, though it cannot be reduced to social idealism, unavoidably means a crucial component of social idealism. Remove that component, and the problem of Jewish distinctiveness for both individuals and institutions becomes critically acute. (It is fashionable, we know, in some advanced circles to look down on the “bourgeois liberalism” or “bleached substitutes for religion” by which many American Jews live, but thinking about how much more dismal American politics would be if those senti-

ments were removed is enough to make one a little less condescending.)

Moralizing is not enough. In their present moods, most American Jews are not likely to respond to it. What the coming years require are concrete social programs that will recreate links between Jews and their former allies in the liberal-labor alliance. Resisting cuts in the public financing of hospitals or school lunch programs or education is a moral good in its own right, but it is also a way of bringing together Jews, blacks, Puerto Ricans, white ethnics. If, as seems likely, there will be areas in which the interests of Jews and blacks clash, then at the very least we should avoid journalistic apocalypticism. Every effort should be made to contain such clashes, to keep them within appropriate limits. And for Jews, it might be appropriate to remember the crucial difference in America between our discomforts and their ordeals.

It is an inherently dubious notion that a

measure of affluence—and that, after all, is the modest limit beyond which a great many American Jews have yet to move—necessarily signifies or requires a turn to conservatism. It assumes that middle-class people don't share many interests with poorer people, interests ranging from tax reform to national health insurance, from good schools to urban renewal. It is a view of things that accepts a crudely Marxized vision of society in behalf of a Nixonite politics.

Moralizing may not be enough, it may even jar many nerves; but finally the moral argument is crucial. Those deep impulses of value and care that have drawn many Jews toward the liberal-left, regardless of whether it seemed to be in their personal interest—those impulses remain. The Messiah still has not come, not to New York, not to Chicago, not to Washington, not to Florida. The world still cries out with its torments. Ours is a time (when has it not been?) for compassion and commitment.

□

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Dennis H. Wrong

The Rhythm of Democratic Politics

Democratic societies with universal suffrage and competing political parties experience a cyclical alternation of periods dominated by protest from the Left and retrenchment by the Right. The notion that politics conform to such cyclical periodicity is scarcely a new one: it is implicit in the most commonplace language of political journalism, which regularly uses such metaphors as “swing of the pendulum,” “rising and ebbing tides,” or “waxing and waning” forces, to describe events.

The conception of a Left/Right continuum along which parties, movements, regimes, and ideologies can be located has often been justly criticized,¹ yet some such conception seems indispensable and invariably creeps back in hidden guise when the conventional categories are repudiated. I shall use “Left” to refer to programmatic demands for planned or enacted social change toward a more equal distribution of economic benefits, social status, and power, or, in unpropitious times, to the defense of an existing, achieved degree of equality against advocates of increased inequality. The classic Left demand is to realize for all men the French revolutionary slogan of “liberté, égalité, fraternité.” Since the Left as an established and permanent political tendency came into being at the time of the French Revolution, the “Right” is best defined residually as resistance, on whatever grounds, to any further

movement toward equality in the distribution of material satisfactions, status, and/or power, or as the demand for restoration of a (usually idealized) *status quo ante* in which greater inequality prevailed.

Obviously, these sparse definitions raise all sorts of problems if they are applied to the rich diversity of past and present political movements. Yet they embody the most common, minimal understanding of the Left/Right distinction. In emphasizing the broad *content* of political demands, they avoid the difficulties raised by classifying political groups as Left or Right according to their social base—whether they are supported by or direct their appeals to the victims or the beneficiaries of the existing distribution of rewards and privileges. Thus Peronism in the 1940s and ’50s was not necessarily a leftist movement because its main following was among industrial workers; nor must New Left student movements of the ’60s be considered “really” rightist because their members were disproportionately drawn from upper-middle-class backgrounds.

Nor need the actual structure of a party or regime determine its classification as Left or Right: parties of the Left may be led and controlled by tiny, self-perpetuating elites, while parties of the Right may be organized in a loose, decentralized, “populistic” manner. Communist dictatorships appeal, at least outside their borders, to supporters of the demands of the Left, although, since my primary concern is with the politics of democracies, the problem of how to classify nondemocratic regimes that claim legitimacy

¹ For a useful recent critique, see Giovanni Sartori, “From the Sociology of Politics to Political Sociology,” in Seymour Martin Lipset, ed., *Politics and the Social Sciences* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969), pp. 77–80.

through an identification with the Left can be safely put aside.

Before the Enlightenment a "Left" in the modern sense of a vision of a more egalitarian future society to be created by organized political effort did not exist. Nor was there an identifiable "Right": conservative ideologies and organizations emerged only in response to the challenge of the Left. Citing Hegel's famous "owl of Minerva" metaphor, Karl Mannheim defined conservatism as traditionalism become conscious of itself and wrote: "Goaded on by opposing theories, conservative mentality discovers its *idea* only *ex post facto*."² Since most societies through most of history have been traditionalist, claiming their legitimacy from continuity with the past rather than from a vision of the future, classical conservatives, viewing the world *sub specie aeternitatis*, have dismissed the outlook of the Left as the expression of Enlightenment naiveté over the perfectability of man, as presumptuous intervention in the workings of "providential forces" (Burke), or as an attempt, necessarily tyrannical in its outcome, to destroy "organically" evolved societies and rebuild them according to an imposed design.

The more subtle conservative thinkers, from Burke to Michael Oakeshott, have repudiated efforts to construct a conservative ideology, recognizing that the strength of conservatism lies in the emotional attachment of mortal men to the world as they have known it, in an only apparently irrational conviction that "what is, is right," which actually implies the unspoken major premise that it is right *because it is*. All men, including men of the Left, cannot help forming emotional attachments to what has the inestimable advantage and power of actually existing. Even prisoners have learned to love their bars, and most of us feel nostalgic about the places and people of our childhood no

matter how unhappy it may have been. This is the existential root of conservatism—of the "eternal Right." Its strength has been habitually underestimated by the Left, even within the Left's own constituency of the deprived and oppressed; the naturalness of conservative emotions is too often facilely dismissed as indoctrination by the ruling class (these days as "brainwashing by the mass media"), or, more pretentiously, as "false consciousness," a term that carries a heavy burden of responsibility not merely for ideological delusions but for actual political crimes.

Contemporary technocrats, of course, are committed to the planned application of scientific knowledge. Their anti-ideological animus seems very remote indeed from classical conservatism with its religious piety and preference for faith over reason, its aura of knights and ladies and agrarian life—and, for that matter, from the free market of 19th-century capitalism.

But there is a curious continuity between a technocratic outlook favoring a "pragmatic" politics engaged in by the representatives of established organizations and the implicit pragmatism of such conservatives as Oakeshott, who fear rational abstractions and universal principles and affirm instead their trust in the implicit truths of "experience."

But there is an "eternal Left" too, as deeply rooted in the human condition as the eternal Right even if it only became a conscious political tendency after the Enlightenment. The vision of the Left derives from the Vichean insight that man makes his own history, or "socially constructs his reality," in today's fashionable sociological parlance. Once this insight enters general awareness, the social world is demystified and classical conservative veneration of a fixed social order sanctified by the past loses meaning. Men feel "alienated" precisely because they know that theirs is a man-made world of arbitrary, makeshift social arrangements which they

² *Ideology and Utopia* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1946), p. 207. See also Mannheim, *Essays on Sociology and Social Psychology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1953), pp. 98–101.

can imagine it otherwise. We have learned only too well that they may respond to this alienation with frenzied efforts to remystify the world, to press the genie back into the bottle, rather than by embracing the challenge to try to create the now possible free and egalitarian community envisioned by the Left.

Political democracy makes actual the eternal Left in time and history. By giving a voice to the voiceless, mobilizing the apathetic, and organizing the unorganized it introduces planned and directed social change as a principle of historical movement. The voice of the people need not be sanctified as the voice of God, but democracy requires that it at least be heard and taken into account. Democratic politics legitimizes demands for reform and, introduced into societies that remain highly unequal and create new inequalities in the course of their economic and technological growth, is therefore incurably ideological. The end of ideology would mean the end of the Left as a political force and the end of democracy itself—either by the restoration or creation of an authoritarian or totalitarian regime, or by the achievement of utopia.

The institutionalization of the Left in democratic politics initiates a long-term movement toward realization of the goals of the Left, a movement inherent in the workings of political democracy. However, all firmly established groups, including parties of the Left, become committed defensively to their own continued survival within a system that has permitted them to develop and even flourish. Michels called this the “iron law of oligarchy”; it has recently been described more accurately and renamed the “iron law of decadence” by Theodore Lowi. As organized groups become frozen in defense of their own internal structure, the stasis of Lowi’s “interest-group pluralism” threatens; the spirit of the Left seeks to reactivate not only itself but the very power of majoritarian democracy through those nascent rather than fully organized groups

we call “social movements.”³ But the resistance offered by the Right—as organized minority power, as inarticulate mass sentiment, as metaphysical reflection of the human condition—produces the oscillating pattern I have called the rhythm of democratic politics. How does this rhythm manifest itself and what is its source?

The periodicity of Left and Right in democratic political life is not necessarily equivalent to an alternation of parties in power, nor of governments actually pursuing more or less egalitarian or conservative policies. Political leaders, in office or out, frequently talk one way and act another, or follow inconsistent policies whatever their rhetoric. The achievements of politics are often symbolic ones—which is not to minimize their significance. The rhythm or cycle is rather one of the *kinds of issues* that dominate political debate, and often intellectual and cultural life as well. Nor is this rhythm the sole, or even always the major, substance of democratic politics. If the division between Left and Right is the most enduring focus of political conflict, it is nevertheless often obscured by ethnic, religious, and racial cleavages within particular polities. In the past, Marxists in particular have been predisposed to deny the autonomy and irreducibility of such “subcultural” cleavages, although their domination of the political life of a large number of countries is by now fully clear. One can nevertheless abstract out of the welter of the democratic political experience a discernible rhythm—or dialectic—of Left/Right conflict, which represents at least *one* major theme of their politics. Perhaps there is also a rhythm in the development over time of ethnic or religious struggles, a rhythm intersecting or

³ *The Politics of Disorder* (New York: Basic Books, 1971), pp. 3–61. Lowi mentions the civil rights movement of the early '60s as an example of such a social movement outside of the established parties and interest organizations (p. 60). See also Lowi's earlier book, *The End of Liberalism* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1969).

superimposed upon that of Left/Right conflict. But my concern here is solely with the latter.

The cyclical rhythm is not the effect of a mysterious cosmic law; it rather reflects a pattern of change that is inherent in the working of a democratic political system in a class-divided society. Political democracy based on universal suffrage was itself originally a demand of the Left introduced into previously authoritarian and hierarchical social orders. In European countries, though not in the United States, it was the central issue around which new working-class and socialist parties organized in the closing decades of the 19th century. For the formal, i.e., the legal and constitutional, redistribution of power achieved by universal suffrage to have any consequences in reducing social inequalities, a long period of political mobilization of the lower classes had to take place, a process that is scarcely complete even today in many countries, including the United States. Once, however, parties of the Left have been organized, or the lower classes have been successfully mobilized by older parties, some crisis such as an economic depression, defeat in war, or a split in the ranks of the Right is bound to give the parties of the Left the opportunity to win office, whether on their own or as part of a coalition. They are then able to carry out reforms that constitute at least their minimum program. But the crisis passes or is resolved; the Right regroupes while conflicts between moderates and radicals on the Left become more acute; and the discontent of the Left's electoral constituency is temporarily appeased by the limited gains, actual or symbolic, that have been won. The Right then returns to office after successfully persuading a sizable segment of the Left's regular following that a conservative government will not wipe out these gains.

Although American political history has often been regarded as uniquely "consensual" and free of ideological conflict, it fits rather neatly into a pattern of oscillation be-

tween periods in which demands from the Left dominate, and those given over to periods of reaction. In any case, whatever truth there may have been in the past to the view that American politics reflected the historical peculiarities of American origins and destiny—the doctrine of American "exceptionalism" as it has sometimes been called—the idea has increasingly lost plausibility. Richard Rovere, one of the more astute observers of American politics, remarked in 1970 that "the Europeanization of American politics proceeds . . . apace."

The periodization of American politics into successive Left and Right eras was presented at length by Arthur Schlesinger, Sr., in a 1939 article, "Tides of American Politics," revised and expanded in his 1949 book *Paths to the Present*,⁴ which attracted a good deal of attention at the time. His son, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., revived and updated his father's thesis in the late 1950s to argue that the '60s were destined to be a period of reform and innovation favorable to the liberal wing of the Democratic party, in which he himself was an active figure.

The elder Schlesinger divided American history into 11 periods of alternating Right and Left ascendancy—he used the labels "conservative" and "liberal"—from 1765 to 1947, each one averaging 16.5 years with very slight deviations around the mean, except in the period from the Civil War to the end of the 19th century. Schlesinger's inferences or "predictions" for the years ahead have been borne out to a surprising degree.

In this century, if we carry Schlesinger's periodization up to the present and modify it very slightly, there are five distinct periods. The progressive era is usually seen as beginning with Theodore Roosevelt's accession to the presidency in 1901 and ending with American entrance into World War I, or, at least, with Wilson's congressional losses

⁴ *Paths to the Present* (New York: Macmillan, 1949), pp. 77–92.

in 1918. The period from 1918 until Franklin D. Roosevelt's election in 1932, or, perhaps, until the stock-market crash in 1929, was a period of war-inspired patriotism, postwar reaction (the "Red Scare"), return to "normalcy" under Harding and Coolidge, and complacent prosperity. The decline in the momentum of the New Deal is often dated from Democratic losses in the midterm elections of 1938, but World War II prolonged and partially revived the ideological climate of the '30s. (Someone has remarked that 1948 was the last year of the '30s.) The Cold War, Korea, Republican victories, and the years of McCarthyism to which these events contributed gave a conservative cast to the '50s. The Left began to recapture some political initiative with the civil rights movement in the South in the late '50s, shortly followed by the rhetoric of the New Frontier and the resounding electoral repudiation of a militant right-wing presidential candidate in 1964. A few years later the "radicalization" of large segments of college youth and intellectuals in response to the Vietnam War created a mood of left-wing insurgency on a variety of fronts. Since 1968, however, reaction or "backlash" against the black, student, and peace movements has been a salient theme of our politics, exploited by George Wallace's candidacy in the 1968 and 1972 election campaigns, and very closely identified with the Vice-President and the Attorney-General who were the most publicized figures of the first Nixon administration. The mentality that led to Watergate fed off the mood of backlash.

Wars often appear to mark the beginning or the end of the intensification of particular phases of the cycle. Schlesinger denied that there was "a correlation between foreign wars and the mass drift of sentiments," maintaining that "these conflicts have taken place about equally in conservative and liberal periods, sometimes coming at the start, sometimes at the end and sometimes midway." But surely foreign wars differ in the

ideological significance they possess for domestic currents of opinion. Also, their significance has certainly increased since the 1930s. Moreover, as Robert Nisbet has cogently argued, neither nations, continents, nor even units as large as civilizations can be treated as isolated, self-contained "systems" obeying their own internal laws.⁵ They are parts of a large international or supracivilization environment that interpenetrates them. Wars, international crises, and the issues of foreign policy to which they give rise can therefore neither be ignored as shaping agents of the domestic political process nor invoked as *dei ex machina* to account for internal political shifts. Theories of American exceptionalism, on the one hand, and some Marxist analyses, on the other, have unduly minimized this fact.

In general, the ideological coloration of the perceived national enemy has complicated the impact of wars on the Left/Right dialectic. World War I divided the American Left; the Russian Revolution not only further divided it but gave impetus to the period of postwar reaction and repression that ended the Progressive era. World War II, on the other hand, was fought against nations seen as the very incarnation of the values most bitterly opposed by the Left and did not therefore displace New Deal liberalism and its radical allies. The Cold War and Korea, fought against an enemy laying total claim to the ideological heritage of the Left, not only delegitimated the American Left but almost completely obliterated its radical wing. In the '60s, however, the failure and unpopularity of the Vietnam War revived American radicalism and discredited the Cold War. But the fact that responsibility for the Vietnam disaster rested on a liberal Democratic administration created a split on the Left that permitted Nixon's victory in 1968.

The Left, of course, is itself invariably divided into reformist and radical wings, and

⁵ *Social Change and History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969), pp. 240-262.

the shifting balance of unity and conflict achieved by its factions constitutes another dialectic within the larger dialectic of Left and Right. Obviously, the Right is also usually divided between militants and moderates, reactionaries and conservatives, although such divisions have not, I think, played as important a role in the United States as in some European countries.

Metaphors of pendular or tidal movements are misleading when applied to the cyclical rhythm of politics. For the pattern has not been one of a mere repetitive oscillation between fixed points. In Schlesinger's words, "a more appropriate figure than the pendulum is the spiral, in which the alternation proceeds at successively higher levels." The classic Marxist conception of the movement of history has also been described as a spiral, combining a cyclical with a developmental or unilinear motion. But to disclose such a pattern in historical events is not to explain *why* it prevails, or *how* transitions from one stage to the next come about. No one who has read Robert Nisbet's brilliant book *Social Change and History* can retain any illusions on this score.⁶ One must always ask, "What makes the wheels go around?" in the case of a cyclical motion, or, "What propels mankind upward and onward?"—or, at least, forward in a given direction—if a unilinear trend is exhibited. Neither recurrent cycles, unilinear evolution, nor a spiral course combining them amount to self-sufficient, self-explaining "laws" of change. Schlesinger recognized this in his cyclical account of American politics, but his own explanations of the cycle were brief and vague, scarcely going beyond the assertion of inevitable "changes in mass psychology" resulting from boredom or disappointment with the prevailing phase of the cycle. In trying to account for the cyclical rhythm, Schlesinger also referred to alleged peculiarities of the American people, such as their preference for "empiricism" rather than "preconceived

theory," and their belief in the virtues of competition—although he also acknowledged the existence of a similar rhythm in the Western European democracies.

In his autobiography, published in 1963 just two years before his death, Schlesinger reported that Franklin D. Roosevelt's adviser, David Niles, once told him that FDR was influenced in his decision to run for reelection in 1944 by Schlesinger's calculation that liberalism would remain dominant until 1948 (based on his figure of a 16.5 years' average duration of each phase of the cycle).⁷ Schlesinger also mentioned a preelection column by James Reston in 1960 maintaining that John F. Kennedy "based his campaign on the assumption," derived from Schlesinger's "theory," that a turn to the Left was in the offing within a year or two.⁸

If these stories are true, Roosevelt and Kennedy would seem to have understood the cyclical pattern in far too mechanical a fashion that is vulnerable to Nisbet's strictures. Such efforts to predict the exact duration of periods of the cyclical or spiral rhythm, while they possess a dangerous fascination, do not increase our understanding of it. For a description of the rhythm, however accurate, *explains* nothing whatsoever: in the language of logicians, the rhythm is an *explanandum* rather than an *explanans*—an effect of underlying causes rather than a causal agency itself. Moreover, it is highly likely that in recent decades the rhythm has accelerated as a result of the increasing saturation of modern populations by the mass media. Nowadays a "new" generation seems to come along every five years or so.

An explanation of the rhythm of democratic politics must necessarily be historically specific, because party politics under conditions of mass suffrage are less than a century

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 284–304.

⁷ *In Retrospect: The History of a Historian* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1963), p. 108.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 190–191.

old even in most of the stable, "advanced" constitutional democracies of the West. Yet it may be possible to formulate explanatory generalizations that transcend the historical uniqueness of particular nations. Furthermore, it is at least worth observing in passing that there is some evidence of a similar periodicity in nondemocratic states. Despotic rulers of absolutist monarchies have often been followed by rulers more responsive to pressures from below. Totalitarian dictatorships undertake "great leaps forward" that are succeeded by periods of relaxed discipline in which "a hundred flowers" are encouraged to bloom. An analyst of Stalin's rule has written of the "artificial dialectic" imposed by the dictator on Soviet society, where rigorous demands for total ideological conformity and the use of terror to deter even the mildest dissent abruptly alternated with periods of greater permissiveness or "thaw."⁹

But an explanation of the rhythm of democratic politics must necessarily be specific to constitutional mass democracies. I shall try to summarize schematically the elements of such an explanation.

(1) The political mobilization of the previously disenfranchised lower classes is a long and slow process, still incomplete in many of the major Western democracies, as indicated by higher-middle- and upper-class as against working-class rates of voting, higher working- and lower-class support for parties of the Right than of upper- and middle-class support for parties of the Left, and the occasional survival of formal and informal barriers to voting imposed on some low-status groups, such as blacks in the American South. Thus even after the win-

ning of full citizenship rights, including the right to vote, by groups previously subject to legal discrimination, "conservative government," in Woodrow Wilson's words, "is in the saddle most of the time."

(2) But Left parties and movements succeed in mobilizing a large enough proportion of their potential constituency to become leading opposition parties, sometimes displacing older parties as in the rise of Labour at the expense of the Liberals in Britain. Sometimes they emerge as the first and largest organized mass parties confronting electoral or governmental coalitions of smaller parties of the Right, as on the European continent. Sometimes they partially transform an older, heterogeneous, and factionalized party into a vehicle for the demands of newly mobilized lower-class groups, as in the United States. Sooner or later the Left party wins office, often as a result of a severe economic crisis or the impact of a war (especially a lost one) that discredits an existing government.

It has often been the fate of the Left parties to come to power at a time of such acute crisis for the entire society that they are forced to concentrate on improvised short-run policies to restore or maintain internal peace, with the result that their long-range goals of social reconstruction have to be shelved or severely modified, inspiring accusations of "class betrayal" from their more militant followers. The Social Democracy in the first and last years of the Weimar Republic is the classic case. Nevertheless, by coming to office the Left party wins a kind of legitimacy in the eyes of the electorate that it previously lacked and it is usually able to carry out at least a part of its minimum program. But failure to resolve the crisis that brought the party to office, or the passing of the crisis whether or not the government's measures are given credit for this; splits between the party's or government's radical and moderate reformist wings once the minimum

⁹ O. Utis, "Generalissimo Stalin and the Art of Government," *Foreign Affairs*, 30 (January 1952): 197-214. The author writes: "This—the 'artificial dialectic'—is Generalissimo Stalin's most original invention, his major contribution to the art of government . . ." p. 210. ("O. Utis," which means "nobody" in classical Greek, was a pseudonym here adopted by Isaiah Berlin.)

program has been passed; the retrenchment of the Right during a period in opposition; and a constant factor—what George Bernard Shaw called “the damned wantlessness of the poor”—all result in electoral defeat or the “co-optation” of prominent leaders before the Left party has done more than institute “incremental,” or “token,” reforms.

(3) The return of the Right, however, is conditional on its persuading the electorate that it will not “turn the clock back” on the reforms achieved by the Left. Old issues bitterly contested in the past by the parties suddenly become obsolescent and periods of “Butskellism,” or even Grand Coalitions between the rivals, become the order of the day, isolating and infuriating the more militant partisans on each side who may break away and create splinter or “ginger” groups within legislatures, or “extraparliamentary opposition” movements outside. The Right party, in an effort to enhance or consolidate its appeal to the constituency of the Left, may adopt new hybrid, apparently contradictory, names or slogans designed to suggest that it has outgrown past hostility to Left policies now in effect, such as “Tory Socialism,” “Progressive Conservatism,” “Christian Democracy,” or “Moderate Republicanism”—this last a label favored by President Eisenhower shortly after his first election.

This recurrent sequence of events is the rhythm, or the “dialectic,” of politically directed change in a democracy. It falls far short of realizing either the far-reaching hopes of the advocates or the apocalyptic fears of the opponents of universal suffrage in the 19th century. Why do parties of the Left become so pallidly reformist and achieve so little in the way of fundamental “structural change” in the direction of their egalitarian ideals? Machiavelli gave the most general answer long before the establishment of democratic institutions:

It must be considered that there is nothing more difficult to carry out, nor more doubt-

ful of success nor more dangerous to handle, than to initiate a new order of things. For the reformer has enemies in all those who profit by the old order, and only lukewarm defenders in all those who would profit by the new order, this lukewarmness arising partly from fear of their adversaries, who have the laws in their favor; and partly from the incredulity of mankind, who do not truly believe in anything new until they have actual experience of it. Thus it arises that on every opportunity for attacking the reformer, his opponents do so with the zeal of partisans, the others only defend him half-heartedly, so that between them he runs great danger.¹⁰

The contemporary social scientist would doubtless put it in different and far less elegant language, but his conclusion would be much the same as Machiavelli's.

Yet the potential electoral constituency of the Left in modern democracies is larger than that of the Right—“God must love the poor people for he made so many of them,” Lincoln once remarked. Popular elections based on universal suffrage give decisive weight to the one political resource with which the lower classes are amply endowed—numbers. How does the Right counter this demographic superiority of their opponents? In the first place, the Right possesses a massive advantage with respect to other political resources—wealth, education, social status, traditional legitimacy—and is able to throw these into the balance in election campaigns as well as employing them on an enormous scale to influence government policy between elections. In confronting the electorate, however, the most regular and reliable strategy of the Right is to appeal to nationalist sentiment. Modern nationalism is itself, of course, a product of democratic ideology, born in the wake of the French and American Revolutions. But this very fact has served to enhance its appeal in opposition to the class and antielitist populist appeals

¹⁰ *The Prince*, chap. VI. See pp. 21–22 in the Modern Library Edition (New York: Random House, 1940).

of the Left, which has so repeatedly and tragically underestimated the strength of national loyalties in this century.

The Right lays claim to the symbols of legitimacy identified with the past of the nation, indeed with its very existence in a world of competing nation-states, an existence usually achieved by wars of conquest or revolts against foreign domination which usually, though not in the United States, antedated the creation of democratic institutions and the extension of the franchise. Thus parties of the Right tend to wave the flag, to nominate generals who stand "above politics" as candidates for office, and to invoke the need for national unity, in contrast to the divisive appeals of the Left. National leaders of the Right have sometimes engaged in foreign adventurism and even embarked upon limited expansionist wars in order to overcome internal tensions generated by the domestic class struggle. War has often in this sense been "the health of the state," in Randolph Bourne's famous dictum. Parties of the Left, on the other hand, have traditionally been isolationist in the United States, internationalist and anti-imperialist on the European continent, and Little Englanders in Britain.

If events ensure that sooner or later reformist parties of the Left will come to office, and if the return to office of conservative parties is partly conditional on their leaving untouched the popular reforms carried out by Left administrations, then there is an *unmistakable "leftward drift" inherent in the functioning over time of democratic politics*. The existence of such a drift alarms and enrages militants of the Right; its slowness and the many counterpressures to which it is subject disillusion and radicalizes utopians of the Left, who then dismiss parliament as a "talking-shop," the major parties as "Tweedledum" and "Tweedledee," and "the system" itself as a fraud in professing to offer opportunities for change. Militants of both Right and Left are disposed to conclude with Machiavelli that

Thus it comes about that all armed prophets have conquered and unarmed ones failed; for . . . the character of peoples varies, and it is easy to persuade them of a thing, but difficult to keep them in that persuasion. And so it is necessary to order things so that when they no longer believe, they can be made to believe by force.¹¹

Segments of both Right and Left, in short, are attracted by violent revolutionary or counterrevolutionary shortcuts: in the case of the Right, to arrest and even reverse the leftward drift; in the case of the Left, to accelerate and complete it. The Right calls for a government of "national unity" that will not hesitate to suspend constitutional liberties and suppress the opposition parties, while the Left succumbs to a mood of revolutionary impatience, or "utopian greed." In periods of acute national crisis and distress, a "dialectic of the extremes," to use a phrase of Raymond Aron's,¹² in which each side violently confronts the other, often enough in the streets, may take center stage and threaten the survival of democratic institutions themselves. The last years of the Weimar Republic are, of course, the classic example of such a confrontation.

But even in less critical situations, this dialectic is visible at the periphery rather than at the center of the political arena and often seems to be gaining momentum through the enlistment of growing numbers of partisans on each side. The tactic of Left militants is to attack the entire political system as part of a repressive "Establishment" moving toward "fascism," and the most plausible evidence for this is found in the efforts of militants on the Right to brand their customary political opponents as Communist sympathizers, or dangerous radicals encouraging disrespect for law, insurrectionary violence, treason, or all three. The Left calls for a "popular front" against "repression" and incipient "fascism." The Right reaffirms tradi-

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

¹² *The Century of Total War* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1954), pp. 241-261. I am much indebted to Aron's brilliant discussion.

tional values and calls for a closing of ranks against the fomenters of public disorder. At the level of rhetoric and public demonstrations, this kind of ultimatum ideological politics was fairly visible in the United States during the late '60s. That it may become at least a permanent sideshow of American politics is one implication of the notion of the Europeanization of American politics to which I previously referred. The dialectic of the extremes reflects an effort, conscious or unconscious, to short-circuit the "normal" pattern of alternating periods of protest and stabilization with its built-in tendency toward a glacially slow "leftward drift."

Democratic conservatives, or "moderates," frequently reject "ideological politics" in favor of a "pragmatic politics" based on bargaining, compromise, and consensus on the rules of political competition. Their suspicion of those on both the Left and the Right who out of impatience with the stately rhythm of democratic politics wish to fracture it by making a forward "leap to socialism" or a restoration of an idealized status quo ante is surely well-founded. But the "ideological" demands of idealists, visionaries, "extremists," prophets, and seers are also part of the democratic political process—sources of "input," as some political scientists would gracelessly say. Without them, the professional politicians would have little to bargain about and strike compromises over. The major political philosopher of democracy, John Stuart Mill, recognized this when he wrote of his brief period of service in the House of Commons:

If . . . there were any intermediate course which had a claim to a trial, I well knew that to propose something which would be called extreme was the true way not to impede but to facilitate a more moderate experiment. . . . It is the character of the British people, or at least of the higher and middle classes who pass muster for the British people, that to induce them to approve of any change, it is necessary that they should look upon it as a middle course: they think every proposal extreme and violent unless they hear

of some other proposal going still further, upon which their antipathy to extreme views may discharge itself.¹³

Mill's tone reflects the relatively serene and civil politics of Britain in the Victorian age when the franchise was still restricted. Out of the experience of the disorder and violence of European mass politics in this century, Albert Camus observed: "Heads must roll, and blood must flow like rivers in the streets, merely to bring about a minor amendment to the Constitution." This is easily read as a despairing or cynical rejection of political effort. But recall that Camus' heroic exemplar of the human condition was Sisyphus. The task of the Left is always Sisyphean. Movement toward its goals is at best asymptotic. Disappointment is always likely over the "wantlessness" and fickleness—often sourly labeled "false consciousness"—of the suffering and oppressed the Left seeks to serve. Committed neither in principle nor pragmatically to the world as it is, defined rather by its "project" in the Sartrean sense, the Left is inherently prone to bitter internal struggles over which ends, means, and agencies advance or hinder that project.

The Left is often proclaimed to be obsolete as a result of the very establishment of political democracy, since the voice of the people at any given time so rarely fully affirms the aspirations of the Left. The actual role of the Left is usually the undramatic one, as Barrington Moore, Jr., has recently defined it, of keeping "radical fire" under liberal reforms.¹⁴ The Left might well attribute to political democracy as an ironic motto Galileo's famous aside when forced to recant his belief in the Copernican theory: *eppur si muove*—"and yet it still moves." But unlike the mechanical force of the sun's gravity, the effort and will of men and women on the Left are what keep the system of democratic politics in motion. □

¹³ *Autobiography* (London: Longmans, Green, 1908), p. 168.

¹⁴ *Reflections on the Causes of Human Misery* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1972), pp. 156–168.

Octavio Paz

Twilight of Revolution

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The idea of revolution was the great invention of the West in its second phase. Societies of the past did not have real revolutions; they had changes of mandate and dynasty. Apart from these changes, they experienced profound transformations: births, deaths, and resurrections of religions. In this respect, too, our era is unique: no other society has ever made revolution its central idea. If this second phase of Western civilization comes to an end, as many people believe and as the reality that we all live tells us, the clearest sign that the end is approaching will be what Ortega y Gasset prophetically called "the twilight of revolutions." It is true that we have never had so many; it is also true that none of them fits the Western conception of what a revolution is. Like the first Christians waiting for the Apocalypse, modern society has been waiting for the arrival of the Revolution since 1840. And revolution is coming: not the one that we have been waiting for, but another one, each time another one. Faced with this unexpected reality which cheats us, theologians speculate and try to prove, like Confucian mandarins, that the mandate of heaven (the idea of revolution) is the same; what is happening is that the prince (concrete revolution) is unworthy of the mandate. But there comes a time when people cease believing in the speculations of theologians. This is what has begun to happen in the second half of our century. We are witnessing the denoue-

ment today: revolution against revolution. It is not a reactionary movement, nor is it inspired by Washington: it is the revolt of the underdeveloped peoples and the rebellion of the young in the developed countries. In both cases the idea of revolution has been attacked in its very center, as much as or more than the conservative idea of order.

I have written elsewhere of what must be called "the end of the revolutionary period in the West." I shall merely repeat here that the idea of revolution—in the strict sense of that word, such as it has been defined by modern thought—is undergoing a crisis because its very root, its foundation, the linear conception of time and history, is also undergoing a crisis. Modern thought secularized Christian time and from among the temporal triad—past, present, and future—it crowned the latter the ruling power of our lives and of history. The future has reigned in the West since the 18th century. Today this idea of time is coming to an end: we are living the decadence of the future. It is therefore an error to consider contemporary social upheavals as expressions of the (supposed) revolutionary process which history has been said to consist of. Although these disturbances have been unusually violent and will probably be even more violent in the future, they in no way correspond to the ideas concerning what a revolution is or should be that Tyrians and Trojans,

from Chateaubriand to Trotsky, had worked out. On the contrary, all these changes, beginning with that in Russia and not excluding the ones that have taken place in China and Cuba, have failed to confirm the theoreticians' predictions: none of them has occurred where it should have and none of the classes and social forces in the forefront of these changes have been what they should have been. Reality is perverse and stubborn: these changes have occurred in different places, among different classes, and with different results. Whatever their ultimate meaning may be, these events give the lie to the linear idea of history, the notion of the human course of time as a process possessed of a logic, in other words, a genuine *discourse*.

The idea of process implies that things happen one after the other, either in the form of sudden leaps and bounds (revolution) or in the form of gradual changes (evolution). Progress is a synonym of process because it is thought that every change results sooner or later in an advance. Both modes of succession, the revolutionary and the evolutionary, correspond to a vision of history as a march toward something—we are not exactly certain where this something is, except that this *where* is better than the situation today, and that it lies in the future. History is envisioned as a continuous, never-ending colonization of the future. There is something infernal about this optimistic vision of history; the philosophy of progress is really a theory of the condemnation of man, who is doomed perpetually to move forward, knowing that he will never arrive at his final destination. This way of thinking is rooted in the Judeo-Christian tradition, and its mythical counterpart is the expulsion from Eden. In the garden of paradise, a present without a single flaw shone brightly; in the deserts of history, the only sun that guides us is the fleeting future. The subject of this continual pilgrimage is not a nation, a class, or a civilization, but an abstract entity: humanity. As the subject of history, "humanity" lacks substance; it is never

present in person: it acts by means of its representatives, this people or that, this class or that. Persepolis, Rome, or New York, the monarchy or the proletariat, any one *represents* humanity at one moment or another of history as a member of the legislature represents his electors, and as an actor represents the character he is playing.

History is a theater in which a single person, humanity, becomes many: servants, masters, bourgeois, mandarins, clergymen, peasants, workers. The incoherent shouting of all these voices turns into a rational dialogue and this dialogue into a philosophical monologue. History is a discourse. But the rebellions of the 20th century have violated both the rules of dramatic action and those of representation. We have unforeseen irruptions that disturb the linear nature of history: what should have happened has not occurred and what should have happened later happens now. If Chinese peasants or Latin-American revolutionaries are today the representatives of the subject "humanity," who or what do American and European workers, not to mention the Russian proletariat, represent? Both the events and the actors betray the text of the play. They write another text, or rather invent one. History becomes improvisation. This is the end of discourse and rational legibility.

What might be called *the inversion of historic causality* has its counterpart in the breaks in the linear order. I shall cite an example. It used to be supposed that revolution would be the consequence of the contradiction between the forces of production created by capitalism and the system of capitalist ownership. The fundamental opposition was: industrial production/private capitalist ownership. This real, material opposition could be expressed in terms of a logical dichotomy between reason (industrial production) and unreason (private capitalist ownership). Socialism would be the result of economic development; at the same time it would be the triumph of reason over the

irrationality of the capitalist system. Necessity (history) possessed the rigor of logic; it was reason incarnate. Both history and reason were identified with morality: socialism was justice. And, finally: history, reason, and morality became one with progress. But modern revolts, including the Russian one, have not been the consequence of economic development, but of the absence of development. None of these revolts broke out because there was an irreconcilable contradiction between the system of industrial production and the system of capitalist ownership. On the contrary: in these countries the contradiction went through an initial phase and was therefore socially and historically productive. The results of these movements were also paradoxical. In Russia there was a leap from an incipient industrial capitalism to the system of state ownership. By doing away with the stage of free competition, unemployment, monopolies, and other disasters of capitalism were avoided. At the same time, the political and social counterpart of capitalism—free labor unions and democracy—was literally ignored. No longer a consequence of development, socialism has been a method of fostering it. Therefore it has had to accept the iron law of development: the storing up, the accumulation of capital (modestly called “the accumulation of Socialist capital”). Any accumulation brings on the expropriation of plus-value and an exploitation of the workers; the difference between capitalist and “Socialist” accumulation has been that in the first case the workers could group together and defend their interests, and in the second, because of the absence of democratic institutions, they were (and are) exploited by their “representatives.” Socialism, which had ceased being synonymous with historical reason, has also ceased being synonymous with justice. It has lost its philosophical dignity and its moral halo. The so-called “historical laws” have disappeared completely. The rationality inherent in the historical process has proven to be merely one more myth. Or, better: a variation of the myth of linear time.

The linear conception of history makes three things necessary. First of all, there must be only one time: a present continually impelled toward the future. Second, there must be only one leading thread: universal history must be considered to be the manifestation of the Absolute in time, the expression of the class struggle, or some other similar hypothesis. The third requirement is the continuous action of a protagonist who is also unique: humanity and its successive transitory masks. The revolts and rebellions of the 20th century have demonstrated that the subject of history is multiple and that it is irreducible to the notion of class struggle as well as to the progressive and linear succession of civilizations (the Egyptians, the Greeks, the Romans, etc.). The plurality of protagonists has also demonstrated that the leading thread of history is also multiple: it is not a single strand but many, and not all of them are straight ones. There is a plurality of personages and a plurality of times on the march toward many *wheres*, not all of them situated in a future that vanishes the instant we touch it.

The decline of the future is a phenomenon that manifests itself, naturally, in the very place where it shone like a real sun: modern Western society. I will give two examples of its decline: the crisis of the notion of an avant-garde in the realm of art, and the violent irruption of sexuality. The extreme form of modernity in art is the destruction of the object; this tendency, which began as a criticism of the notion of the “work of art,” has now culminated in a negation of the very notion of art. Things have come around full circle: art ceases to be “modern”: it is an instantaneous present. As for sexuality and time: the body has never believed in progress; its religion is not the future but the present.

The emergence of the present as the central value is visible in many areas of contemporary sensibility: it is a ubiquitous phenomenon. Nonetheless, it is most clearly seen in the youth movement. If the rebellion of the underdeveloped countries denies the pre-

dictions of revolutionary thought about the logic of history and the universal historical subject of our time (the proletariat), the rebellion of youth dethrones the primacy of the future and discredits the suppositions of revolutionary messianism and of liberal evolutionism: what excites young people is not the progress of the entelechy called humanity but the realization of each concrete human vocation, here and now. The universality of the rebellion of youth is the real sign of the times: *the signal of a change of time*. This universality must not cause us to forget that the movement of youth has a different meaning in each country: negation of the society of abundance and opposition to imperialism, to racial discrimination and war, in the United States and in Western Europe; the struggle for a democratic society against the oppression of Communist bureaucracies and against Soviet interference in the "Socialist" countries of Eastern Europe; the opposition to Yankee imperialism and local oppressors in Latin America. But these differences do not blur the most decisive fact: the style of the rebellion of youth rejecting the institutions and the moral and social systems that hold sway in the West. All these institutions and systems go to make up what is called *modernity*, in contrast to the medieval world. All of them are the offspring of linear time and all of them are being rejected today. Their rejection does not come from the past but from the present. The double crisis of Marxism and the ideology of liberal and democratic capitalism has the same meaning as the rebellion of the underdeveloped world and the rebellion of youth: they are the expressions of the end of linear time.

The twilight of the idea of revolution corresponds to the rapidity with which revolutionary movements are being transformed into rigid systems. The best definition I know of this process came from a guerrilla in Michoacán: "All revolutions degenerate into governments." The situation of the other heir of Christianity, art, is no better. But its prostration is not a consequence of the in-

tolerant rigidity of a system but of the promiscuity of its various tendencies and manners. There is no art that does not create a style and there is no style that does not eventually kill art. By injecting the idea of revolution into art, our era has created a plurality of styles and pseudostyles. This abundance turns into another abundance: that of styles that die aborning. Schools proliferate and propagate like mushrooms until their very abundance finally erases the differences between one tendency and another; movements live about as long as insects do, a few short hours; the aesthetic of novelty, surprise, and change turns into imitation, tedium, and repetition. What is left for us? First, the weapon of dying mortals: humor. As the Irish poet Patrick Kavanagh said to the doctor paying him a visit: "I'm afraid I'm not going to die. . . ." We can sneer at death and thus exorcise it. We can still begin over again.

What excites me about the rebellion of youth even more than their generous but nebulous politics is the reappearance of passion as a magnetic reality. We are not just witnessing another rebellion of the senses: we are confronting an explosion of emotions and feelings. This is a search for the sign *body*, not as a cipher of pleasure (although we must not be afraid of the word *pleasure*: it is beautiful in every language), but as a magnet that attracts all the contradictory forces that haunt us. It is a point of reconciliation of man with others and with himself; it is also a point of departure leading, beyond the body, to the Other. Young people are discovering values that excited figures as different as Blake and Rousseau, Novalis and Breton—spontaneity, the negation of artificial society and its hierarchies, fraternity not only with men but with nature, the ability to be enthusiastic and also to be indignant, and the amazing ability to be amazed. In brief: they are discovering the heart. In this sense the rebellion of youth is different from those that preceded it in this century, with

the exception of that of the Surrealists. The tradition of these young people is more poetic and religious than philosophical and political; like Romanticism, with which it has more than one similarity, their rebellion is not so much intellectual dissidence as a passionate, vital, libertarian heresy. The ideology of the young is often a simplification and an acritical reduction of the revolutionary tradition of the West, which itself was scholastic and intolerant. The systematic spirit has infected many groups that arrogantly advocate authoritarian and obscurantist programs, such as Maoism and other theological fanaticisms. Embracing "Chinese Marxism" as a political philosophy and attempting to apply it to industrial societies of the West is at once grotesque and disheartening. It is not the ideology of youth but their attitude, their sensibility more than their thought, that is really new. I believe that in them and through them another possibility for the West is opening up, if only obscurely and confusedly as yet, something that has not been foreseen by ideologists and that only a handful of poets has glimpsed. Something still without form, like a world dawning. Or is this only an illusion of ours and are these disturbances the last sparks of a dying hope?

Hearing any participant or eyewitness of the rebellion of young people in Paris in May 1968 is an experience that puts our ability to judge things objectively to the test. In all the accounts I have heard there is one surprising note: the tone of the revolt, at once passionate and disinterested, as if action had been confused with representation: it was like a mutiny that turned into a Festival and a political discussion that turned into a ceremony; epic theater and at the same time public confession. The secret of the fascination that this movement exercised on all those (including the spectators) who were present at its demonstrations lay in its attempt to unite politics, art, and eroticism. There was a fusion of private and collective passion, a continuous ebb and flow between the marvelous and the everyday, the lived act as an

aesthetic representation, a conjunction of action and its celebration. There was a reuniting of man with his image: mirror reflections focused in another luminous body. It was a true conversion: not only a change of ideas but of sensibility; more than a change of being, it was a *return to being*, a social and psychic revelation that for a few days broadened the limits of reality and extended the realm of the possible. It was a return to the source, to the principle of principles: being oneself by being with everyone. It was a discovery of the power of language: my words are yours; speaking with you is speaking with myself. It was a reappearance of everything (communion, transfiguration, the transformation of water into wine and of words into a body) that religions claim as their own though it is anterior to them and constitutes the other dimension of man, his other half and his lost kingdom—man perpetually expelled and torn away from time, in search of *another* time, a prohibited, inaccessible time: the present moment. Not the eternity of religions but the incandescence of the instant: a consummation and an abolition of dates. What is the way to enter such a present? André Breton once spoke of the possibility of incorporating an extra-religious sense of the sacred, made up of the triangle of love, poetry, and rebellion, in modern life. This *sacred* cannot emerge from anything but the depths of a collective experience. Society must manifest it, incarnate it, live it, and thus live and consume itself. Revolt as the path to Illumination. Here and now: a leap to the other shore.

And a nostalgia for Festival. But Festival is a manifestation of the cyclical time of myth; it is a present that returns, whereas we live in the linear and profane time of progress and history. Perhaps the revolt of youth is an empty festival, the summons, the invocation of an event that will always be a future event and never a present one, that never will simply *be*. Or perhaps it is a commemoration: the revolution no longer appears to be the elusive imminence of the future but rather something like a past to

which we cannot return—yet which we cannot abandon either. In either case, it is not here, but there, always beyond our reach. Possessed by the memory of its future or of its past, by what it was or what it could have been—no, not possessed but rather deserted, empty, the orphan of its origin and its future—society mimics them. And by mimicking them it exorcises them: for a few weeks it denies itself through the blasphemies and the sacrilege of its young people and then affirms itself more completely and more perfectly in the ensuing repression. A mimetic magic. A victim anointed by the ambiguous fascination of profanation, youth is the sacrificial lamb of the ceremony: after having profaned itself through it, society punishes itself. It is a symbolic profanation and castigation and at the same time a representation. The events on October 2, 1968, in the Plaza de Tlatelolco in Mexico City evoked (repeated) the Aztec rites: several hundred boys and girls sacrificed, on the ruins of a pyramid, by the army and the police. The literalness of the rite—the reality of the sacrifice—emphasized in a hideous way the unreal and expiatory nature of the repression: the Mexican powers-that-be punished their own revolutionary past by punishing these young people.

In every case and in every country workers have participated in the movement only as unwilling and temporary allies. This indifference is difficult to explain unless we accept one of the two following hypotheses: either the working class is not a revolutionary class or the revolt of youth does not fit within the classical framework of the class struggle. These two explanations are really one and the same: if the working class is no longer revolutionary, and if social conflicts and struggles become more acute instead of dying out; if the recrudescence of these struggles does not coincide with an economic crisis but rather with a period of abundance; and if a new world class of the exploited has not appeared to take the place of the proletariat

in its revolutionary mission, then it is obvious that the theory of class struggle cannot account for contemporary phenomena. It is not that it is entirely false: it is inadequate, and we must seek another principle, another explanation. There are those who will tell me that the underdeveloped countries are the new proletariat. I need hardly point out in reply that the phenomenon of colonial dependence is not new (Marx was familiar with it); moreover, these countries do not constitute a class because of their social, economic, and historical heterogeneity. For this reason they do not have and cannot set up programs and universal plans as an international class, a party, or a church can.

The idea that intellectuals and technicians constitute the new class is more interesting, but unfortunately it has the defect that those groups are neither homogeneous nor can they be considered as a real proletariat—they are not a universal, exploited class. As for young people: no dialectical skill and no trick of the imagination can transform them into a social class. From the viewpoint of revolutionary doctrines, what is really almost beyond explanation is the attitude of young people: they have nothing to gain, no philosophy has named them agents of history and they embody no universal historical principle. This appears to be a strange situation: they are outside the real drama of history in the same way that the Biblical lamb was outside of the dialogue between Jehovah and Abraham. But it no longer seems strange if we observe that, like the rite as a whole, the victim is a representation, or, more precisely, a hypostasis of the revolutionary classes of the past.

The modern world was born with the democratic revolution of the bourgeoisie which, so to speak, nationalized and collectivized politics. By opening to the collectivity a sphere that up until that time had been the closed preserve of a few, it was thought that general politicization (democracy) would immediately result in the distribution of power among everyone. Although democracy—because of the bureaucratic nature of

political parties, economic monopolies, and the manipulation of the means of information—has become a method of a few to control and garner power, we are haunted by the phantoms of the principles, beliefs, ideas, and forms of living and feeling that gave rise to our world. Nostalgia and remorse—this is probably why society indulges in costly and sometimes bloody revolutionary rituals. The ceremony commemorates an absence, or more precisely, it at once convokes, exorcises, and punishes an Absent Guest. The Absent Guest has a public name and another secret name: the first is Revolution and refers to the linear time of history; the other is Festival and evokes the circular time of myth. They are one and the same: the return of Revolution is Festival, the recurring principle of principles. But they do not really return: it is all pantomime, and on another day fasting and penitence. It is the Festival of the goddess Reason—without Robespierre and without the guillotine but with tear gas and television. It is the Return as a verbal orgy, a saturnalia of commonplaces, the nausea that Festival brings.

Or is the rebellion of youth yet another sign that we are living *an end of time*? I have already expressed my belief: modern time—linear time, the homologue of the ideas of progress and history, ever propelled into the future, the time of the sign *non-body*, of the fierce will to dominate nature and tame instincts, the time of sublimation, aggression, and self-mutilation—is coming to an end. I believe that we are entering another time, a time that has not yet revealed its form and about which we can say nothing except that it will be neither linear time nor cyclical time. Neither history nor myth. The time that is coming, if we really are living a change at times, a general revolt and not

linear revolution, will be neither a future nor a past, but a present. At least this is what contemporary rebellions are confusedly demanding. Nor do art and poetry seek anything different, although artists and poets sometimes do not know this. The return of the present: the time that is coming is defined by a *here* and a *now*. It is a negation of the sign *non-body* in all its Western versions: religious or atheist, philosophical or political, materialist or idealist. The present does not project us into any place beyond, any motley, otherworldly eternities or abstract paradises at the end of history. It projects us into the medulla, the invisible center of time: the here and now. A carnal time, a mortal time: the present is not unreachable, the present is not forbidden territory. How can we touch it, how can we penetrate inside its transparent heart? I do not know, and I do not believe anybody knows. . . . Perhaps the alliance of poetry and rebellion will give us a vision of it. I see in their conjunction the possibility of the return of the sign *body*: the incarnation of images, the return of the human figure, radiant and radiating symbols. If contemporary rebellion (and I am not thinking only of that of young people) is not dissipated in a succession of raucous cries and does not degenerate into closed, authoritarian systems, if it articulates its passion through poetic imagination, in the widest and freest sense of the word poetry, our incredulous eyes may behold the awakening and the return to our abject world of that corporeal and spiritual reality that we call *the presence of the beloved*. Then love will cease to be the isolated experience of an individual or a couple, an exception or a scandal. The word *presence* and the word *love* have appeared in these reflections for the first and the last time. They were the seed of the West, the origin of our art and of our poetry. In them is the secret of our resurrection.

Translated by HELEN R. LANE □

A Grammar of Equality

With this essay, and those that appear elsewhere in this issue by Dennis Wrong and Bernard Rosenberg and Irving Howe, we complete the series of articles we have been printing in regard to the new conservative trends in American intellectual life. Of course, if any of the writers criticized in these articles choose to answer, now or in the reasonable future, we shall be glad to print their reply.

The group of essays on the new conservatives will be published as a book in 1974 by Quadrangle Books.—Ed.

Equality, wrote Alexandre Dumas the younger, brought kings to the guillotine and the people to the throne.

Like most felicitous phrases, this is no more than a partial truth. New tyrants rather than “the people” often ascended to the momentarily vacated throne; and not simply equality but the stupidity and malevolence of kings,¹ the ambitions of lesser but avaricious mortals, and the effects of changing economic and social systems brought tyrannical rulers to their deserved end. Yet who can deny that the passion for equality played a stirring and vital role?

Whether it *should* have played that role is the contested and more intriguing question; for the case against equality, though it runs counter to the spirit of the democratic age, remains a formidable one. Consider the following:

¹ Sometimes, oddly enough, as in France and England, strong and ambitious kings granted some political power to the common people in order to limit the power of the aristocracy. Such kings, Tocqueville sardonically observed, “assisted democracy by their talents, others by their vices.”

- Equality requires us to count heads as if each were made out of wood, when in fact some are made of precious metals and others of lesser or even base materials. Still others seem to be no more than empty carcasses held together by tissue and bone. If intelligence and virtue adhere to the normal distribution curve—if, that is to say, in a random group of ten one or two are “brighter” or “better” than the others—it follows that there are few wise and many unwise, or at least less wise. Since in democratic states the quantity rather than quality of minds is politically decisive, it follows too that the less wise will govern the wise. What saves communities from this appalling consequence—if indeed they are saved—is that the wise, precisely because they possess superior intelligence and wisdom, are able to outwit the unwise and persuade them to do the bidding of their betters. But why impose so time-consuming and needless a distraction on the wise? And what if passion so overwhelms the crowd as to render it incorrigible?

- Equality calls upon men and women to do what is psychologically impossible—to

love their own children no more than they love the children of a neighbor, to do for their own parents no more than they would for the parents of others, to treat friends no differently than strangers. Ordinary experience attests to the stubborn truth that men and women give preferential treatment to those with whom they have had closest personal ties; it is "unnatural" for them to do otherwise.

- Equality is incompatible with the necessary arrangements for organizational efficiency, which demand that some sit at the top of the pyramids of power, others at the bottom, and still others at various levels between. Hierarchy is not merely a concomitant of modern technology; it is a principle indispensable to almost every realm of social life, e.g., an army, a university, a hospital, a political system. In our complex world, administration, whether of men or of things, requires organization (or, as Engels put it in 1874, in an essay attempting to discredit the anarchists, "the principle of authority"); which entails ranking; which means inequality (even if not, as Michels argued, oligarchy). It was not without reason that Shakespeare had the Prince of Ithaca say:

Take but degree away, untune that string,
And, hark, what discord follows!

- Equality drives us into an insoluble moral dilemma, and therefore into practices that contradict what we preach. In a world of unequal talents (or diligence, or commitment), equality of opportunity is but a device, though more meritorious than some others, for achieving inequality of results—in power, position, prestige, wealth. To impose equality of results—which is possible in some things, e.g., wealth or income, but not in all things, e.g., status and power—is to limit equality of opportunity. We cannot have both equalities simultaneously, and to opt for equality of opportunity, as in democratic states we purportedly do, is to indulge in open hypocrisy; for we clearly do not intend to follow Socrates' inescapable prescrip-

tion that children be removed from their parents immediately after birth so that all may be raised alike (by identical nurses and tutors?) and given equal (identical?) chances.

- Equality thus entails a commitment to impossible, certainly wrong values. If we were true egalitarians, we would have to remove the distinctions among people by imposing equality of condition, or at least recognition. Yet we do not really intend to denigrate wisdom, virtue and beauty, achievement and success, by withholding appropriate recognition and applause. We do not really mean to admire stupid or wicked persons, or to esteem failure. At best, we speak of a limited equality, e.g., equality of reward in proportion to one's work or (in some ideal versions) need. We do not seek to treat everyone as if they were the same; for as Hobbes said: If all things are equal in all men, nothing would be prized. Hence we recognize that in certain important respects people are remarkably unlike each other, except perhaps (but only perhaps) at moments of birth and death.

- Moreover, by making equality the ultimate end, when it can never be more than but one among many ends, we make it impossible to come seriously to terms with the problem of conflicting ends, of the need at times to subordinate equality to another value, such as liberty or merit, which in a specific context may impose a higher claim on our loyalty. Thus, it is at least doubtful that Western educators will accept the justification of cheating on an examination recently put forward by a group of students in China: that since knowledge is to be shared, it matters not how this is done.

- To these objections we must add a crucial fact: wherever equality has been proclaimed as an operating principle, it has been subverted by the very people who avowedly espoused it. Thus, despite the American commitment to equality before the law, the rich continue to enjoy marked advantages over the poor, the whites over the blacks. Despite

the Christian commitment to the brotherhood of man, most Christians leave fraternal and egalitarian practices to heaven and pursue other practices on earth. Such subversion is deliberate, not accidental. People want it that way. They admire superiority in others; they seek it for themselves; they dream of it for their children. The bitch goddess is sometimes money, but always success; and success means getting ahead of the other, who remains of course—in rhetoric—his brother, his equal.

For these and other reasons, equality (it is still argued) cannot command our exclusive or highest allegiance; perhaps it ought not commend itself at all.

II

On what grounds, then, can the principle of equality be reasonably warranted?

I would argue that there are at least four such grounds:

(1) Equality is not what its detractors generally take it to be.

(2) Equality has an important *negative* function as a protest-ideal as well as a positive content that properly enlists the loyalty of men.

(3) It is a mistake to identify the problems of equality with fatal deficiencies of the principle.

(4) When all is said and done, equality remains an essential ingredient of justice.

Let us consider these in turn.

If equality is not what its detractors take it to be, their criticisms are misdirected; they are launched against an erroneous conception or conceptions of equality. For example:

• Equality does not mean sameness or identity. In Plato's *Republic*, Socrates indicts democracy for "dispensing a sort of equality to equals and unequals alike," fathers descending to the level of their sons, and sons standing on a level with their fathers. But this is a caricature as well as a confusion. Fathers and sons do not stand on the same level, not at least while they relate to each other as fathers and sons, though they might

well stand on the same level as citizens in a polling booth or in a court of law. For they are not merely fathers and sons; they are also persons, with rights and interests outside the parent-child relationship. They both need food, but if one is a mountain-climber and the other a scientist they do not require the same kinds or amounts of food. They both think, but not necessarily in the same way; nor do they necessarily share the same opinions. They may resemble each other physically, yet they are different. To say that men are equal is not to say they are identical—in these or other respects, like cleverness or temperament or wit or character. It is rather to say that behind all these differences there is some common substance of humanity that marks them as men, and in terms of which they are truly equal. They are not equal in all respects, only in all *relevant* respects. What these relevant respects are, I shall explore in a moment. Here it is enough to note that equality does not imply or entail identity in all things.

Nor, by the same token, is difference to be identified with inequality. An apple and an orange are different, but they are equally pieces of fruit. Two people may differ from each other in sex or race or religious affiliation or physical strength, but these connote nothing concerning intellectual or moral capacity; nor do they touch the fact that both people, despite these differences, are still human beings.

• Equality is not liberty, though certain kinds of *inequality* may well deprive men of important liberties. To require all persons to work one day each week at menial labor, or to attend religious services on the Sabbath, or to serve in the armed forces is to treat them equally but to deprive them of corresponding liberties. To allow inequality of wealth or power is to allow some men to live well but others meagerly. To permit racial or religious or sexual discrimination is to provide a favored group the liberty to deny equivalent rights to the disadvantaged.

• To treat all men equally is not always the

same as to treat all cases equally. It may in fact result in treating those very men unequally. Thus, to give all men the same income is to favor the unmarried man and disadvantage the man with a family. To fine all men the same amount for the same offense is to treat the wealthy man lightly and the poor man heavily. To send each person to the doctor once a year, but no more than once a year, is to care for the healthy but not for those who are ill.

• Equality, while essential to justice, is not identical with justice. It is possible to treat everyone equally yet unfairly, e.g., to give all students an unfair examination, to pay all workers an inadequate wage, to compel all persons to worship in the same faith. It may be just to require that all children be sent to school; it would be unjust to require that all be given the same grade, yet to do the latter might (in some curious constructions) accord with equal treatment.

• Equality does not demand that I love my neighbor as myself. To the egalitarian love is not *eros* but *agape*, not carnal or sensual love, not even filial love, but rather charity and respect. Hence I am not asked to *love* or admire him; I am asked only to recognize and respect him as a human being like myself. He is unlike me in many ways; he may be better or less worthy than I in many ways; but in certain relevant ways he remains a person no less than myself.

• Not does equality require the abolition of hierarchy. If organizational and technological imperatives demand that certain individuals sit at the controls while others do their bidding, it does not follow that (say) accident of birth rather than equality of opportunity should be the governing principle to determine who should sit at those controls. Equality is opposed not to hierarchy but to the unjust distribution of place and power within hierarchy. It seeks to contain the range of that distribution and to base it on agreement (and perhaps merit) rather than on ascription.

• Finally, equality, while an ultimate value,

is not the only ultimate and therefore not always the overriding value. Life is not a monolithic or unified whole; there are disharmonies and contradictions, diverse needs and strivings that come into collision, tensions between specific equalities (such as equality of opportunity versus equality of result) and between equality and other values (such as liberty). To press for equality in some things is not to press for equality in all things. To contend for equality does not exclude our contending at the same time for other ends too, which is merely to say that this is what it means to be human, that we want many things but cannot simultaneously obtain all of them, so we must choose. To this problem too I shall return.

III
What, then, is equality? To answer this question adequately it is necessary to consider equality both in its negative significance as a protest-ideal and in its positive content as an ultimate value. This last, in turn, must be grasped both as a general concept and as a system (however disharmonious and changing) of specific equalities and corresponding inequalities. I do not apologize for the complexity of such treatment; for equality, like most political concepts, defies simplistic understanding.

The fundamental and perhaps only legitimate defense of inequality is that it is not conventional but natural: it accords with the nature of men, who differ profoundly in intelligence, talent, and virtue; and it accords with the nature of things, which require hierarchy and degree. Hence the principle: the right man in the right place. However, this, as Giovanni Sartori properly notes,

is an ideal that is never realized, since in its stead what we find only too often is the privileged man in a privileged place. And this is where the demand for equality actually and rightly starts. The claim for equality is a protest against unjust, undeserved, and unjustified inequalities. For hierarchies

of worth and ability never satisfactorily correspond to effective hierarchies of power. . . . Equality is thus a *protest-ideal*, a symbol of man's revolt against chance, fortuitous disparity, unjust power, crystallized privilege.²

If the rich and well-born were also the able, if the powerful were also the virtuous and wise, if, that is to say, actual aristocracies were truly natural aristocracies, based solely on merit; or if, to reverse the terms, the able were made rich, the virtuous made powerful, and the naturally best made the actual best, then the demand for equality might lose much of its force and justification. But history gives an emphatic denial to any such shabby claim. Even Santayana, who argued that it is "a benefit and a joy to a man, being what he is, to know that many are, have been, and will be better than he," felt constrained to attack actual "aristocracies" for their artificial rather than natural eminence. And what did Ortega y Gasset mean by the revolt of the masses if not primarily the domination in our time by men of wealth and power but without taste or standards?

It is no easy matter, moreover, to determine who are the naturally best and to devise a method that will accurately select them and elevate them to power. On these questions political writers have been eloquent but also at odds with one another. Blood and race, wealth and power, education and intelligence, strength (especially as demonstrated in military conquest) and athletic prowess, even piety and the mysticism of charisma, even (it must now be said) attainment of celebrity status, whether of the jet set or the Hollywood screen—all these have been put forward as attributes making for *political* virtue and wisdom. But surely not all these define the best. Nor have those who have come to power through these means remained the best—if initially they were the best—very long. Nor do we have

gods to decide these matters. If to all this we add, with Edward Bellamy, that what any one man is and does is in large measure the consequence of what society and past generations have bequeathed to him and now, by providing conditions and opportunities, make it possible for him to do, we see that the very notion of merit or achievement is social and not simply personal. In what sense, then, is any man's superiority "natural"?

To raise this question is to challenge the most venerable and established commonplace in writings on equality. Political and social theorists from Plato through Hume and Rousseau to a host of contemporary thinkers have drawn a distinction between two sorts of inequality: natural (consisting, for example, in differences of age, sex, strength, and what Rousseau called "qualities of mind or soul") and conventional (consisting of differences in wealth, power, and honor, all of which emerge from the consent of men). We have already noted that the first rarely leads to or corresponds with the second. What now needs to be remarked is that what have been called inequalities by nature are often revealed, on examination and by experience, to be inequalities by convention. I do not seek to deny that there are some natural inequalities. I only argue that many inequalities that have been called natural in the past are not in fact so. Some people still believe women are by nature morally and intellectually inferior to men, blacks to whites (in Uganda, Asians to blacks), a defeated people to a conquering nation. This tells us a great deal about those who hold such beliefs; it does not alter the objective reality. Individuals vary, but why they do so—whether this is the result of an unalterable heredity or a changeable environment, for example—is not altogether clear. Nor can it be said that virtue and wisdom (Rousseau's qualities of mind or soul) owe nothing to society, or, since they conform to certain standards of behavior which are social norms or rules, are natural rather than conventional. Much remains to be done be-

² Giovanni Sartori, *Democratic Theory* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1965), paperback ed., p. 327.

fore we can assert with confidence that a particular inequality is natural and hence, presumably, unalterable.³

What is fatal to any justification of inequality, whether natural or conventional, however, is the fact that inequalities are cumulative and self-reinforcing. Inequality in wealth, for example, leads to inequalities in education, housing, medical care, travel, and the like, and, most important, to inequalities in power. To alter unjustifiable inequalities in the face of this "natural" aggrandizement of inequalities is most difficult, and in some measure impossible. Hence equality as a protest-ideal applies not simply to conventional or unjust inequalities but to inequality as a cumulative and self-reinforcing system of inequalities, both natural and conventional.

IN TURNING TO EQUALITY as a positive ideal, we must make a final point about differences, or inequalities. We must ask: Which differences or inequalities are relevant, and relevant to what? Inequalities are specific, not general. The strongest man may not be the swiftest runner, the gifted violinist may be a poor mathematician, the great scientist a bumbling statesman. To be different or unequal in some things is not necessarily to be different or unequal in the important things, least of all in the single most important thing: to be, to live like a man; to seek one's self-development; to be a rational, free, and relatively autonomous human being.

Here we come to the heart of the principle of equality: *in the things that count men are not, and ought not to be, so much different from each other as to matter*. But what are the things that count?

Hobbes, with his usual felicity, answered the question this way:

Nature hath made men so equall, in the faculties of body, and mind; as that though there bee found one man sometimes manifestly stronger in body, or of quicker mind than another; yet when all is reckoned to-

gether, the difference between man, and man, is not so considerable, as that one man can thereupon claim to himselfe any benefit, to which another may not pretend, as well as he. For as to the strength of body, the weakest has strength enough to kill the strongest, either by secret machination, or by confederacy with others, that are in the same danger with himselfe.

And as to the faculties of the mind, (setting aside the arts grounded upon words, and especially that skill of proceeding upon generall, and infallible rules, called Science; which very few have, and but in few things; as being not a native faculty, born with us; nor attained, (as Prudence,) while we look after somewhat els,) I find yet a greater equality amongst men, than that of strength. For Prudence, is but Experience; which equall time, equally bestowes on all men, in those things they equally apply themselves unto. That which may perhaps make such equality incredible, is but a vain conceipt of ones owne wisdom, which almost all men think they have in a greater degree, than the Vulgar; that is, than all men but themselves, and a few others, whom by Fame, or for concurring with themselves, they approve. For such is the nature of men, that howsoever they may acknowledge many others to be more witty, or more eloquent, or more learned; Yet they will hardly believe there be many so wise as themselves: For they see their own wit at hand, and other mens at a distance. But this proveth rather that men are in that point equall, than unequall. For there is not ordinarily a greater signe of the equall distribution of any thing, than that every man is contented with his share.⁴

It is important not to slight Hobbes's teaching here. Hobbes advances an empirical fact—against classical and Christian thought—what I take to be a first principle of politics: that men must sleep, and when a strong man sleeps his life is in danger; hence to protect himself from weaker men he needs either their assurance that he will be left to awake or protection against them, and pref-

³ Cf. John Rees, *Equality* (London: Macmillan, 1972), paperback ed., chap. 1.

⁴ Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (1651 ed.), Part I, chap. 13.

erably both; hence government, which involves (rests upon) both force and consent. But to establish and maintain a government, the strong must persuade the others that it is also good for them. The appeal must be to the general interest, the common good. And since the weak are also in danger, what is common to them all is the fear of death, hence a love of peace, and a desire for a system of order that will enable them all to live and to pursue a commodious life. This, whatever their differences of mind, they can all grasp. To this they can all agree. From all of which it follows that what is common to men is more important than what differentiates or divides them. Inequalities of body or mind are thus (in Hobbes's view) trivial, not politically relevant, because not relevant to their survival as men.

It is true that survival without regard to the purposes for which men survive—e.g., to live “virtuously”—is not an acceptable end for a classical or idealist philosopher; but since, for Hobbes, “there is no such *Finis ultimus* (utmost ayme,) nor *Summum Bonum* (greatest Good,) as is spoken of in the Books of the old Morall Philosophers,” this is not a fatal objection. It is enough that men should be protected against an untimely death and be given an equal chance to attain their ends.

So too with Rousseau, who in pressing the case for equality differs from Hobbes in but two respects: he looks to other, conventional rather than natural, attributes of men; and he does so in normative rather than descriptive terms. Here is the relevant passage:

By equality, we should understand, not that the degrees of power and riches are to be absolutely identical for everybody; but that power shall never be great enough for violence, and shall always be exercised by virtue of rank and law; and that, in respect of riches, no citizen shall ever be wealthy enough to buy another, and none poor enough to be forced to sell himself.⁵

⁵ Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, trans. Cole (Everyman's ed., 1913), Book II, chap. 11, p. 45.

Clearly, equality does not entail identity, at least not (for Rousseau) in power and wealth. What it does require is moderation—“on the part of the great, moderation in goods and position, and, on the side of the common sort, moderation in avarice and covetousness.” It requires that the *range* of differences be contained: that inequality of power shall never enable one man to dominate another, to force him to act against his will; and that inequality of wealth shall similarly be limited to prevent any man from becoming master or slave. Neither a master nor a slave, neither to demean nor to be demeaned—this (for Rousseau) is the essence of equality.

Given these equalities—of ability and of rank—it follows, to invoke Hobbes again, that men may properly have equality of hope in attaining their ends. And if, to return once more to Rousseau, we are told that such equality is an unpractical ideal that cannot actually exist, that its abuse is inevitable, it does not follow that we should not at least make regulations concerning it. Indeed, Rousseau argues, “it is precisely because the force of circumstances tends continually to destroy equality that the force of legislation should always tend to its maintenance.”

CENTRAL as these considerations are, it is not enough to rest with them. We must go back, if briefly, to Aristotle and forward to John Stuart Mill. I think of Aristotle here not for his distinction between numerical equality and equality proportionate to desert (of this, more later), but for his discussion of the general causes of revolution. What concerns Aristotle is the state of mind which leads to sedition. Here he makes principal the passions for equality and inequality.

There are some [he says] who stir up sedition because their minds are filled by a passion for equality, which arises from their thinking that they have the worst of the bargain in spite of being the equals of those who have got the advantage. There are others who do it because their minds are

filled with a passion for inequality (i.e. superiority), which arises from their conceiving that they get no advantage over others (but only an equal amount, or even a smaller amount) although they are really more than equal to others. . . . Thus inferiors become revolutionaries in order to be equals, and equals in order to be superiors.⁶

If, then, we are to assure stability in a society, we must take account of the attitudes and opinions of men. Whatever the justification or lack of justification for particular views, a polity that ignores what men think or believe runs the risk of disruption. For men fight for what they want or think they want, and they frequently want what they think they are entitled to have. If ordinary men regard themselves as politically competent (as equal), as they do, they will fight, as they have fought, to obtain an equal voice and an equal position. To deny them that voice is to assure conflict and perhaps revolution. Similarly, if men strive for inequality (i.e., superiority), this too will make for disorder. Moderation in men is then essential for social and political stability, and such moderation can only be achieved where the range of differences does not exceed the boundaries of what is tolerable. Which returns us, inescapably, to equality.

We come, finally, to John Stuart Mill and the liberal conception of man. Here the meaning of (and case for) equality may be briefly stated, for it turns primarily on but two notions: the rationality of man and the importance of individuality.⁷ If man—each man—has a mind, he must be free to use it. This entails the right to choose, to decide between alternatives, to determine one's own way of life. It is true that he may choose wrongly, i.e., contrary to what another thinks. But to let that other choose for him makes it unnecessary for him to have, as

Mill put it, "any other faculty than the ape-like one of imitation." By surrendering his mind, he surrenders himself; he remains a child. If he is to realize (or retain) his stature as a man, he must be equal in his right to decide for himself. And that he may choose differently from other men is not a risk but a virtue, the indispensable condition for the pursuit of self-development, identity, individuality. Without individuality, in all its rich diversity, what is society but a drab, uniform, and static collection of robot-like beings?

It is true also that, because man lives in society, he cannot be free to make *all* decisions for himself. No society can allow him to decide that he will drive on the left side of the road when others are required to drive on the right, or to kill or steal or otherwise injure his fellowmen at his pleasure. But being in society need not deprive him of the right to share equally in making such decisions. In the language of Thomas Rainborough, a spokesman for the Levellers, "the poorest he that is in England hath a life to live, as the greatest he"; hence the poorest and the richest should share equally in determining the conditions under which they are to live. Every man is to count for one; no one is to count for more than one.

IV
I have spoken thus far of equality as a general concept. In the real world, however, we are confronted not by "equality" but by many diverse and not always compatible equalities. Not all of course simultaneously press for our attention; not all are equally relevant to or applicable in a given situation. But it is sometimes the case that two or more equalities collide; then in choosing one we necessarily limit or curtail another. To which specific equality shall we give priority in a particular case, and why? Moreover, to choose among equalities—to treat men equally in some things (say voting) but unequally in others (say income)—requires a principle or principles of justification other than equality itself. To the extent that this

⁶ Aristotle, *Politics*, trans. Barker (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946), Book V, chap. 2, p. 207.

⁷ For Mill's doctrine, see his essays *On Liberty* (1859), *Utilitarianism* (1861), and *Representative Government* (1861).

choice between two kinds of equality is derived from other considerations, equality becomes a derivative value. But it is still a choice between two equalities in their own right, and in this respect equality remains an ultimate value. Beyond this, it is also often the case that there are ambiguities and tensions both within a particular equality (say equality of opportunity) and between equality however conceived and other values. We do not live in a tidy world. We are constantly jarred and tormented by incompatible, yet mutually commanding, ideals: honesty and kindness, love and obligation, equality and liberty, or excellence, or heroic achievement. These are the problems—to some the deficiencies—of equality, to which I now turn.

Let us begin with Aristotle's distinction between numerical equality and equality proportionate to desert, for in one form or another this remains perhaps the central problem of equality. According to the first sort of equality, all shall be treated alike; hence a sales tax or uniform wage or price or rent or bus fare is just, and a graduated income tax or differential wage or price or rent is not. According to the second, each shall be treated according to his merit; hence the reverse of the first set of practices would apply; for in these terms to give to the superior no more than is given to the inferior, or to extract from the poor man with a family of four the same rent or tax or price as the unmarried rich but not more meritorious man, is manifestly wrong.

In Yugoslavia some years ago, workers in a factory were bitterly divided over the question whether the same wage was to be given to each worker, on the principle that all stomachs are equal, or apportioned according to each person's contribution, on the principle that some did more, or better, or more important work than others. Apart from the not inconsiderable difficulty in defining each man's "desert," or determining the right proportion, which of the two notions of equality is correct? Why? (It ought to be noted, if only parenthetically, that a further inconvenient problem attaches to the

numerical conception of equality here. For in the absence of strict controls over spending, providing for equality of wages or income may soon lead to inequalities of wealth—given the fairly evident fact that some men are frugal and save while others quickly rid themselves of all that they receive.)

Or take the idea that each member of an orchestra shall be rewarded equally for a fine performance. Does this mean giving each player his favorite instrument, in which case one may get a pair of cymbals and another a grand piano, or does it entail giving each player the same instrument (say a violin) or a ten-dollar bill?

Consider the socialist principle of equality: from each according to his ability, to each according to his need. The one place where this principle is almost universally found is, paradoxically, in the family, perhaps the least egalitarian of human associations. Shall we now apply it in the realm of work? If so, what shall we say to the women's liberation movement when a wife demands "appropriate" payment for her labor even though her husband may already earn a sum sufficient to provide for both their material needs? Shall we diminish his (or her) earnings proportionately, or insist that she (or he) work without pay?

And what of the venerable adage, Let the punishment fit the crime? Should it not rather be, Let the punishment fit the criminal, thereby taking into account such factors as age, motive, circumstance, and frequency (or infrequency) of offense? Shall the figure of justice really be blindfolded, or should she (or he) look at each case with clear and searching eyes?

To these and similar questions Aristotle, though he understood the problem, offered no satisfactory answer. With his customary prudence he observed:

Some take the line that if men are equal in one respect, they may consider themselves equal in all: others take the line that if they are superior in one respect, they may claim superiority all round. . . . The right course is (not to pursue either conception exclu-

sively, but) to use in some cases the principle of numerical equality, and in others that of equality proportionate to desert.

The difficulty of course is that such a formulation does not tell us which cases properly fall under the one, and which under the other category. But then, no general principle can decide each concrete case; always secondary principles and special circumstances enter into consideration.

Most decisively, these conflicting notions of equality entail a perennial, because irresolvable, paradox: namely, that to treat different (unequal) people equally (the same way) is often to achieve unequal results—e.g., to give a sickly person no more medical care than is required by a robust person is not to produce equally healthy individuals; while to treat different people differently (unequally) may be precisely what is required (as in the given example) to produce an equal result.

From all of which it follows that not mathematics or formal logic but experience, circumstance, and the shared values of a particular people at a particular time will variously determine the outcome. But whether that determination is the “right” outcome remains an open question.

LET US TURN NOW to certain difficulties inherent in a seemingly simple and widely accepted principle: equality of opportunity. Surely if a society is to have hierarchies or pyramids of power—and what society can avoid this?—it is proper that movement up and down the ladder accord with competence or merit. But (and this indeed is a very large but), as already noted: (1) the equal opportunity principle requires conditions that neither our own nor any other society outside the visions of utopian thinkers is willing to provide, e.g., removing children from their parents immediately after birth and raising them in common. Moreover, every actual society is disfigured by discriminatory practices and unjust arrangements that limit or vitiate equality of opportunity. Hence, whatever the rhetoric, the principle

is at best approximated but nowhere fully observed. And (2) even if the principle were to be realized, it would lead, paradoxically, to a nonegalitarian result; for in a differentiated and hierarchical society equality of opportunity is but another mode—even if the “best” mode—of arriving at inequalities of condition, notably of power, status, and (commonly) wealth.

These considerations are alone sufficient to render the principle suspect. But there is, in the view of some critics (oddly enough, critics of the Left rather than the Right), an even more fatal objection to the equal opportunity principle: namely, that it converts life from a cooperative adventure of equal human beings into a competitive struggle of unequal talents, in the course of which not individuals but aspects of individuals are prized, and as a consequence of which losers, who are the bulk of the human race, are denigrated and demeaned.

Consider the following statements:

When you think of equality of opportunity as the career open to talents, you cease to think of the man who is untalented. . . . The newer conception of merit is not talent but personality, creativity, which includes talent but sets it in its rightful place. Justice consists not in seeing that all start from the same line, permitting all to race, and awarding prizes to the winners, but rather, abandoning the whole idea of a race with prizes, in seeing that each is as far as possible given space, scope, room, and encouragement to employ his free powers in the building of a human life.⁸

Striving is not for equality nor for superiority; it is for the enhancement of uniqueness. . . . When it is being itself which is valued, then none can be inferior, or superior. . . . People are not [to be] valued in terms of achievement. People are [to be] valued for what they are. . . .⁹

⁸ Albert Hofstadter, “The Career Open to Personality: The Meaning of Equality of Opportunity for an Ethics for Our Time,” in *Aspects of Human Equality*, ed. Lyman Bryson *et al.* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1956), pp. 123, 136.

⁹ Dorothy D. Lee, “Equality of Opportunity as a Cultural Value,” in *ibid.*, pp. 259, 261, 268.

Now in one sense—a very profound sense—these contentions are surely unassailable, for they ask no more than that we recognize and respect the reality (and the rights) of each individual as a living presence. They ask us to set aside the vexing problem of determining the value of a man's talents—often by arbitrary if socially approved standards—and thereby to avoid the consequential division of men into higher and lower orders, into various strata of inequalities. Far more, they ask us to cease judging men as fragmented beings, in terms of their functional roles, and to look at *who* they are rather than at *what* they do. Then it matters not whether a man is a butcher or a doctor, a garbage collector or an engineer. What matters is that he is a man, who happens to perform a certain task for some portion of his time, but who is also a husband and a father, a friend and a neighbor, perhaps a churchgoer and a participant in certain communal activities, but always a total person and a full-time member of the same human race. He is with us, of us, in us. And he counts, not because he is different, but because he is the same.

In these terms the equal opportunity principle, because it leads to and emphasizes differences, inequalities, is destructive of what is most essential to the human enterprise—respect for that which is common to all men, their humanity.

Yet, when all this has been said, can we really abandon the equal opportunity principle? Can we really ignore talent and disperse not simply with differences but with the esteem we attach to differences? In so far as a man is a teacher, or an artist, or a statesman, do we not wish him to be a *good* teacher or artist or statesman? And shall we not esteem the *better* rather than the poorer teacher? Moreover, if in the modern world specialization of function is unavoidable, if organization and consequently hierarchy are *necessary*, then how except through the equal opportunity principle can we assure a just determination of place? It is true, as Michels argued, that organization and hierarchy

carry with them a tendency to oligarchy, but the task then is surely to guard against the conversion of that tendency into a reality; it is not to abandon organization and hierarchy, which is in any case impossible. It is also true that the esteem we generally attach to differences and inequalities may often exaggerate (or diminish) the worth of the individual as a total being; but the problem then is not that men are functionally different, and behave toward each other as superiors or inferiors in certain roles, but that *we* (or society) impute a certain value to such differences, and *that* plainly is a matter of reeducation.¹⁰

The greater difficulty seems to me to lie in another direction. For if deficiencies in existing arrangements and practices militate against the proper functioning of the equal opportunity principle, it follows that those who stand at various levels in the pyramids of position and power do not necessarily belong there. It is then necessary either to correct those deficiencies or, if that is not possible, to shift our attention away from the principle of equality of opportunity to the alternative, perhaps complementary, principle of equality of result. Thus, it was not the doyens of the New Left but a moderate liberal, Franklin D. Roosevelt, who in 1932 proclaimed that "equality of opportunity as we have known it no longer exists," called for "a re-appraisal of values," and set as our task "distributing wealth and products more equitably." In the same vein,

¹⁰ This may explain why certain "socialist" and allegedly egalitarian countries, such as Czechoslovakia, seek to rationalize *their* differences and systems of hierarchy as constitutive of "socialist stratification," as distinct from capitalist, bureaucratic, technocratic, and other "debased" forms of stratification. See Ernest Gellner, "The Pluralist Antilevelers of Prague," *DISSENT*, Summer 1972, pp. 471–82. It may also explain the curious argument of Professor John H. Schaar, who after denouncing hierarchy and the equal opportunity principle concludes by affirming that "of course there must be hierarchy" and that "the equal-opportunity principle is certainly not without value." See his "Equality of Opportunity, and Beyond," in *Equality*, ed. J. R. Pennock and J. W. Chapman (New York: Atherton, 1967), chap. 13.

in his address on the State of the Union in January 1944 he articulated what he called "a second Bill of Rights," including the right to a useful job, an adequate income, a decent home, adequate medical care, a good education, and other components of what we now associate with the welfare state.

What is of interest here is the notion that a man's success or failure is not simply the consequence of his innate ability but, in some measure, of the system—its practices, arrangements, and (let it be said) its derangements. Hence equality of result—meaning by equality not identity but the tolerable range of which Aristotle and Rousseau spoke—is the necessary and altogether proper mode of redress. Then, paradoxically, equalization of results provides the conditions that make possible a greater measure of equality of opportunity. So the two principles, far from being intrinsically in opposition, come together as alternative or complementary means to the same end—the achievement of justice in determining fitness and place.

In short, despite all its admitted difficulties, the equal opportunity principle, whether as a working standard to be approximated or an ideal by which a people shall be judged, remains an essential element of any right ordering of social life.

I TURN BRIEFLY NOW to the familiar yet still vexing question: Does a commitment to equality endanger other ultimate and equally prized ends, in particular liberty?¹¹

¹¹ I forgo for reasons of space a range of further problems that should at least be indicated here: whether equality entails a right to equal property or an equal right to property; whether equality before the law requires a public defender no less adequately staffed and funded than a public prosecutor; whether, as the transformation of Eliza Doolittle from a flower girl into a duchess suggests, it is in fact true that persons who are treated alike tend to become alike; and whether equality within a single realm of social life (say the political), or within an aspect of that realm (say the suffrage), can meaningfully coexist with inequalities in other realms (the family, the school, the church, the army, the corporation).

This of course is the problem that agitated Alexis de Tocqueville and John Stuart Mill and that concerns not merely conservatives but traditional liberals today. For at one level the answer to the question is surely affirmative. To say that all persons shall behave, or not behave, in a certain way—pay taxes, observe the traffic laws, send children to school, abstain from polygamy or trespass—is to deprive them of corresponding liberties. In this obvious sense *every* law or custom that imposes a uniform requirement is an interference with liberty.

But liberty, like equality, is not a simple entity, like an apple pie, out of which each law cuts an irretrievable piece. Nor is government, through law, the only source of interference with liberty; other men and groups, through force or economic sanctions or other forms of pressure, also interfere with human freedom. To assure a particular liberty, such as freedom of expression, it is then necessary to restrain those nonpolitical powers who might otherwise limit it—on the alleged ground that the speech in question is (say) obscene or subversive or otherwise harmful. Law in that case enters not simply as a restraint but as a restraint on a restraint. All of which is to say that liberty, properly understood, is a complex of particular liberties—of speech, religion, travel, and the like—and of concomitant restraints.

To determine whether the law should restrain or tolerate a social restraint, and thereby secure a particular liberty for some (perhaps only under certain circumstances) but not an apposite liberty for others, is merely to recognize that not all liberties are equally important, or equally desirable. Liberties, like equalities, must be ranked hierarchically; and when we give primacy to one we may well have to surrender another.

In the same way we must choose between conflicting liberties and equalities: between the liberty of parents to raise their children as they see fit, giving them what advantages they can, and equality of opportunity, which requires that all children be treated alike, that no child receive less (or more) than

another, and hence that all children be raised in common; between the liberty of an employer to hire whomever he pleases (say only red-haired, white-skinned females) and antidiscrimination laws which in the service of equality require him to employ qualified persons of whatever sex and color; between the liberty of a man to live among "his own kind" and the egalitarian requirement that residential areas be open to all; and so on.

It is not always the case that equality will, or should, prevail over liberty. In the name of individuality, we deny the right of egalitarians to compel hippies to dress and behave as others do. In the name of religious freedom, we deny the right of egalitarians to require all children, including the children of atheists and agnostics, to take religious education in the schools, or, in the case of children whose parents are members of Jehovah's Witnesses, to salute the flag.

Nor is it always the case that liberty will, or should, prevail over equality—witness our antidiscrimination laws.

So when we confront the diverse issues that bedevil us today, whether it be equality versus inequality of result, or conformity versus diversity, we must understand that there is no simple and final resolution. Both liberty and equality, while in one sense ultimate values, are also derivative values; for when there are conflicts among or between them, it is only with reference to another and presumably higher principle that they can be handled. This higher principle is sometimes stability, but since stability is itself justified only when the system is worth preserving, it is generally some conception of justice or the common good.

Now every theory of justice—whether it looks to God or nature or tradition or utility or an initial (actual or hypothetical) social contract—is vulnerable to serious criticism; and none, it seems hardly necessary to add, is universally accepted. If we forgo mutual slaughter or the authoritarian im-

position of a particular creed, and turn instead to a democratic resolution of this disagreement, we build once again on the principle of equality.

For what counts in democratic states is not the putative truth or falsity of a theory but majority acceptance or belief, and this is the outcome of a process of negotiation, bargaining, compromise, and voting. What is crucial to this process is the question: Who shall participate? If the democratic response is, as it must be, *all*, then all must be equally free to articulate, assess, and judge among alternative policies. Equality and liberty thus again come together in a common cause.

From this standpoint, equality is not, as Isaiah Berlin would have it, simply an ultimate principle that "cannot itself be defended or justified, for it is itself that which justifies other acts—means taken towards its realization."¹² It is rather an instrumental principle that cannot be other than defended and justified, for it is indispensable to the realization of something other than itself—namely, democracy. Those who, for whatever reason, opt for democracy must opt too for at least those equalities essential to democracy. And if among the diverse forms of state democracy is a just regime, perhaps—though I cannot argue this here—the *best* regime, it follows that those equalities (and liberties) appropriate or necessary to democracy are warranted; for to will the end is also to will the means.

But democracy, it may fairly be contended, is itself not an end but a means, a political principle or set of arrangements that must be defended or justified in terms of what democracy does for man. To the extent that this is true, it only reinforces the justice of equality. For what democracy does, as John Stuart Mill so ably argued, is to enable each man both to protect himself and to elevate himself. To protect himself

¹² "Equality as an Ideal," in *Justice and Social Policy*, ed. F. A. Olafson (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1961), p. 150.

against misgovernment, not by entrusting another with his guardianship but by himself standing up for his rights and interests, by himself exercising his power—of opinion and of political participation, not merely through the suffrage but also by taking an actual part in the government—and thereby sharing, as far as any one individual can, in the making of decisions that govern his life. To elevate himself morally and intellectually, by that very participation, acquiring through discussion and ensuing enlightenment a concern not only for his own selfish interests but for the general good.

Thus democracy, whether as end or as means, vindicates the egalitarian claim.

THE CASE FOR THE JUSTICE OF EQUALITY of course does not rest here. If the end is man, then equality—even if by equality we mean treating different people in the same way—is essential to the very life of man. For however different people may be, in some respects they are the same. They all want to live, and all societies—despite wars and other forms of senseless killings—respect this as a fundamental right. This is why we have traffic regulations and laws against murder, hospitals and safety devices in automobiles and industrial plants, life-guards on bathing beaches, and the like—all without regard to sex, race, religion, intelligence, and other matters that differentiate persons from one another. Given this equal right to life, it follows that all men are equally entitled to whatever is necessary to sustain and protect life. At a minimum, this means that no man can legitimately be denied adequate food, clothing, housing, medical care, etc. Beyond that minimum, decent and rational men may disagree as to what is required. In most societies today, for example, education—though not of course at the same level in all societies—is recognized as such a necessity.

What is entailed here is the notion of need. Obviously, different people need different things. But just as obviously, all people need the same, or the same sorts of things.

Equality thus builds on what is common to men, on what is necessary, perhaps even on what is good, for all men. To exclude any individual or group from these rights—to life and the things essential to life—is to deny their humanity. Possibly there are good reasons for denying these rights, or some of them, to particular persons or groups under special circumstances; but in such cases the burden of proof is surely on those who would argue for those exceptions. And exceptions they must remain. No principle is absolute, automatically binding in all cases without regard to circumstances; but without the principle of equality it is difficult to see what sense can be made of “the common” that is at the very heart of what it means to be a man.¹³

MEN WANT NOT MERELY TO LIVE but to live well. From a moral point of view, this means that they wish to live, if not nobly, at least justly; to do good rather than evil, to act rightly rather than wrongly. It cannot be said that everyone understands precisely the same things by “the right” and “the good.” What can be said is that they are generally agreed on at least one principle appropriate to the determination of what is right and good. This is the principle of fairness.

We do not call a race fair when one runner is hobbled by a ball and chain and another is mounted on a horse. We do not call a fight fair when one pugilist’s hands are encased in armor and the other in foam-padded gloves. We insist in both cases that those who enter the contest do so on the same terms. We do not recognize as fair a trial where only one party is represented by adequate counsel, safeguarded by the rules of evidence, and given an opportunity to testify in his behalf. We do not call a social order fair that gives only some people the liberty to criticize the government and to pursue their own life-styles. Nor do we consider fair an arrangement that stacks the conditions behind these procedures to the

¹³ I am especially indebted here to Rees, *op. cit.*, pp. 134–38.

advantage of one party: e.g., where one pugilist is considerably taller and heavier than the other, or where parental wealth is distributed so unevenly that the rich child but not the poor can satisfy his desires or alone have the power to qualify himself so that he may earn them.

From this perspective, fairness as a principle of justice dictates equality.¹⁴ Fairness does not prescribe the "right" result; it requires us to treat people equally in order to arrive at the right result. Or, conversely, it stipulates that no person shall be treated differently from another without just cause; and by just cause I mean not simply reasons—there are always "reasons"—but arguments and justifications that make sense and carry conviction on logical, empirical, and moral grounds. Thus, to say that there shall be no cruelty without just cause is not to preclude (say) punishment for heinous crimes, but to prohibit the arbitrary imprisonment or debasement of "inferior" by "superior" peoples.

This sort of equality—what may be called equality of consideration—is an ultimate end in that it affirms the intrinsic value of every human being. It does not deny that there are differences (inequalities?) among men. It rather insists that such differences do not justify—except for good and sufficient reasons—the withdrawal from some men of those conditions which are required for the development of their varying individualities. It insists that no man is fully human who must bend his knee to a master, who is cast into secondary importance and subjected as a consequence of that label to unjustifiable inequalities. It insists that, whatever the differences among men, what is common to them all is the desire to lead the kind of life each wants to lead; and that, from this standpoint, it does not matter that one is wealthier or more powerful or more prestigious than another; what matters is

that each should be equally free, and reasonably able, to be himself, to live as he wishes to live, and not as another wants him to live.¹⁵ Not merely equality in this kind of freedom, but also respect. It is fashionable in certain quarters today to disparage the value of tolerance; but surely tolerance—of each man's rationality, of his right to be different, to live as he thinks best—is essential to his humanity. In this at least all must be equal. And since it is obvious that some limits must always be placed on individual action, those limits too must emerge only from an equal consideration of each man's rights and interests.

In the wisdom of the classical philosophers, justice consists in giving each man his due. This has generally meant treating unequal men unequally, according to their differences. But in another, and I think greater wisdom, justice consists not in looking at what divides men but at what unites them, what is common to them all. And what is common to them all is their equal integrity as human beings. It may well be that a full theory of justice must attend not to one or the other of these conceptions but to both. In that case all must still be treated equally in those respects in which they are equal. Equality does not require more.

VI

We can now see where the newer critics of equality—Daniel Bell and Irving Kristol,¹⁶ among others—have gone wrong. They are of course much too sophisticated and insightful not to have dwelt on legitimate concerns or not to have taken account of some of the more obvious objections to their positions. Nevertheless, it remains the case that they have not come adequately to grips with

¹⁴ Cf. John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971), and Brian Barry, *Political Argument* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1965), especially chaps. 6–7.

¹⁵ Cf. John P. Flumenatz, "Equality of Opportunity," in *Aspects of Human Equality*, *op. cit.*, chap. 4.

¹⁶ Daniel Bell, "On Meritocracy and Equality," *Public Interest*, Fall 1972, pp. 29–68; Irving Kristol, "About Equality," *Commentary*, November 1972, pp. 41–47.

the nature and complexities of the specific equalities they treat; they have tended to confuse the specific equality they condemn with the whole of equality; and, most important, because they have sought to build on what divides rather than on what unites men, they have not understood the necessity of equality for the maintenance of community.

Thus, when Bell pleads the cause of meritocracy, he does not fully face up to the deficiencies of the equal opportunity principle in actual societies, and the implications of such deficiencies for the notion of personal achievement. When Kristol worries about the nature and implications of a greater measure of equality in income, and of the costs entailed by a redistributive policy, he neglects the costs entailed by the maintenance of existing, unjust practices and confuses this particular equality with the whole of equality. When they both, along with many others, argue against equality of result, they do not confront the fact that inequalities of result create privileges that vitiate equality of opportunity and thereby render inequitable the results that have in fact emerged and will continue to emerge, and that society must then intervene to redress or even (perhaps) cancel out those privileges so as to restore—or newly establish—an initial equality of opportunity.

All too often these newer critics contest not equality but a caricature of equality. No serious liberal or socialist thinker has ever held to a notion of absolute equality. None, to my knowledge, has ever maintained that equality must apply to all things

—to cards in a deck, pictures in an exhibition, ideas in the marketplace. None, to my knowledge, has ever maintained that equality precludes our distinguishing old from young men, or young men from children, when drafting soldiers into the army. Nor has any serious liberal or socialist thinker failed to recognize the tensions and conflicts among equalities, or between equality and other values, such that choices must be made and some equalities set aside. This is precisely why, for liberals and socialists, equality is so important; for in making those choices all men must equally share.

All men must share, for all are members of the community. Now a community embraces partial associations, like a university or a corporation, but it transcends them. For it builds not on those aspects of the individual relevant to the association—his special aptitudes and talents—but on his wholeness as a person. A community, unlike a corporation but like a family, does not recognize degrees of membership; it does not value an individual only as a means, as an instrument to the fulfillment of the association's purpose; it values him as an end. Consequently it respects and cares for him as an end. As such, he is equal—equal in his humanity, and in the rights and freedoms appropriate to that humanity.

Whatever the limits of equality, whatever its difficulties, this then remains true: without equality properly understood and constantly held in view as *a* (but not of course *the*) first principle, there can be no community, and hence no individuality. And without these there can be no just society. □

A Talk with Günter Grass

When Günter Grass, the distinguished German writer, paid a visit to the United States last October, we arranged for an informal taped discussion between him and two of our editors, Michael Harrington and Irving Howe. The discussion, based on a common political outlook, began in a leisurely way, and then, suddenly, Grass was called away for personal reasons. We could not find a way of continuing it. But we think that what did take place is interesting enough to be printed, even though it is only a fragment of "A Talk With Günter Grass."—Ed.

MH: Let me raise a question, Günter—partly in terms of your critique of some aspects of the West German *Ostpolitik*—about the question of détente and of freedom in the Soviet Union. The three of us obviously are in favor of both—détente, and freedom in the Soviet Union; of utilizing whatever bargaining position the Western nations have in trying to maximize the right of persons in the Soviet Union to emigrate, the right of dissent, etc.

My question is, where do we draw the line? Is there a point at which you have to choose between the two? I think, for now, we can be in favor of both—because I don't think we have pushed the Russians at all as far as they should and can be pushed on these issues. But do you think there comes a point when one may have to make a choice between détente and peace—and internal dissent, the right to emigrate, etc.?

GG: I would like to go back a little bit in time. During the period of the Cold War, both sides were treating each other as enemies. And I think the concept of détente means seeing the other side perhaps merely as an *opponent*, and not as an *enemy*. Now everywhere in Europe people are saying, The Cold War is over, let's be friends. The big businessmen are saying, Let's do business between Western private capitalism and Eastern state capitalism. When Mr. Nixon and Mr. Brezhnev meet, they look

like friends who understand each other well—*perhaps too well*—and I'm afraid of this understanding between the Nixon mentality and the Brezhnev mentality. It has been my experience in Germany that diplomats in the foreign office, who ten years ago were speaking and thinking only in terms of cold war, now are friendly toward the Soviet Union and now don't want to make any trouble. We need good relations between the Soviet Union and the Bundesrepublik, they say, because we need to do business with them. . . .

There is great danger in what I would call Metternich politics, the kind of "*Heilige Allianz*" that really is very unholy indeed. And it can happen to all the friends of this new peace politics and possibility of coexistence that, if they ask questions about cultural substance and about what is going on in the Soviet Union and various other East European countries, they will get this answer: What you are doing is making a cold war! Don't disturb our new politics! This is a danger that is coming. But I think it is still early enough to heed a warning—and also to give the other side, the Soviet Union, the feeling that they, themselves, have to do something about the conditions in the East. We have to continue to look critically at their system, and I'm afraid that the leaders of the Soviet Union and the leaders of the various Communist parties in the East are prisoners of their own system. This system is built

as a hierarchic tower, ruled exclusively from the top, with commands coming down from the Central Committee to the base of the party, that is, the mass of the people—and no questions are permitted to come from that base. . . . And so I'm afraid that they will not be able to reform their own system. From time to time they try in the economic sector, because it doesn't work very well. But whenever they try, immediately questions come from the cultural sector, or from other parts of the hierarchy, and then they go back again to their old, tight ways. I really don't know how they can even achieve economic reform while stifling popular opinion.

I think there was a way in Czechoslovakia, during the Dubcek Spring. It was the first time that Communist reformers did show possibilities of reform within the Communist system, without the danger of what they always call counterrevolution.

And when, somewhere in Central Europe, perhaps in Germany, people ask me, Do you see any chance of German reunification?, I say that it's only possible if both systems change—the systems in West and in East Germany. It will only be possible, really, if our commitment to democracy is more than a formal one, and if the Eastern part of Germany, too, will accept the basic principles of democracy. . . .

In a way it is stupid for a powerful country like the Soviet Union to mistrust its own people. What its rulers don't realize is that they need open criticism, that they could only profit from it. And I have the feeling they know that they need it, but they see no way to get out of this prison that they've built around themselves. And if there is some trouble coming, what they call trouble, they don't know any other way to react than the Stalinistic way.

IH: Left-wing intellectuals like ourselves, democratic socialist intellectuals, are always in trouble. During the years of the Cold War we were saying, Make peace, don't push the Cold War the way you are pushing it. Then Nixon and Kissinger, and others, they go and make a deal with the Russians. And then it seems as if we say, "Well, look, stop, Don't go so fast! Don't push the deal so hard and watch out a little bit!" In other words, it is as if with every policy we are pointing out complications, advocating modifications, caution. But maybe that

is what the role of intellectuals should be. For example, you gave out a statement in Germany, I understand, expressing some hesitations along the lines of your remarks now, and this seems to have had some effect, because Willy Brandt—though he is the head of the state and he had to be diplomatic and cautious—did say something that indicates concern for the intellectuals in Russia. Well, there is a big difference between Willy Brandt and Richard Nixon, because Willy Brandt really cares about such things and Nixon doesn't. But what I am getting at is that it puts us in a very ticklish position. If we go too far, say along the line of the Jackson Amendment, we can easily seem to be favoring retreat to the Cold War. If we go too far in the other direction, we could easily seem to be indifferent to what is happening to our intellectual friends in Russia.

GG: You see, just now, at the moment, you will not read one word in the Soviet newspapers about Watergate. At the same time the Nixon administration will not say one word about Solzhenitsyn and Sakharov. This is a bad kind of agreement. And I'm always saying to left-wing Social Democrats, Don't allow the right wing of our party to stress only the formal differences between Communists and Social Democrats. It is not only a formal question; you have to ask the basic political questions! And these questions must be raised by the left wing of the Social Democratic party! Are you not afraid, is my question, that the big businessmen from the countries of the West and the big businessmen from the state capitalist countries of the East agree in saying, Control by workers is not a good thing. We don't want this! Both don't want it.

In Germany the situation is really curious. The Christian Democrats do not present a valuable opposition; they are still repeating the old arguments of the Cold War period—arguments very easy to shrug off. And now the friends of the Social Democrats, and Social Democrats who helped Willy Brandt, and the Social Democratic party itself, they have to play opposition. They have to ask the new questions: Is it possible to follow a politics of détente that is restricted merely to economic matters? Or are we selling out our tenets of free cultural activities and of tolerance, of the kind of social freedom we need and want in both parts of the world?

This, I believe—this politics of détente restricted to economic concerns—is Metternich politics; this is a Holy Alliance that I don't want and that you don't want.

MH: I would like to raise a sort of related question. I have been trying to follow a bit the developments inside the SPD, and particularly the emergence of the (very radical) Young Socialists (the Jusos) as a force in the party itself. And my impression is twofold. On the one hand, it seems to be a positive thing that young radical socialists for once are not breaking off and forming some extraparliamentary opposition, but are trying to work within the party and through democracy. I think this might bring some new vitality to the Social Democracy. On the other hand, I find some aspects of their opposition very disturbing—for example, what I take to be their position on Israel, which is a rather sharp position, very critical of the Israelis and without any understanding of what is at stake there—and their stand on some other questions, too. I would like to get your estimate of this New Left trend within the German socialist movement. What do you think of it?

GG: When Willy Brandt was in Israel, he was very careful, and I think he was right, not to visit the occupied territories. A lot of people asked him why he was doing that. It was a way of making a point: friendly to Israel but standing apart from its policy on the occupied territories. As for the Young Socialists I always say to them, You have to carry out this struggle with the Communists not in a defensive way, as Social Democrats always do—always saying, Excuse me, we are not Communists, we are Social Democrats! No, you have to show how reactionary the Communist parties are. What you want is basic democracy. You want to see questions coming out from the base of the party, and discussion and communication. This doesn't exist in the Communist world.

When, for instance, we send a right-wing Social Democratic mayor to Kiev and he meets with the mayor of Kiev, they will drink their vodka together and see the same problems, the same technological and business problems. But when a left-wing Social Democrat like Johann Stefan comes and asks, What if a worker wants to change his work place, wants

to go to another factory—is he able to do it? Or if somebody is kicked out, who is protecting him? These are the questions you have to ask, then you will see if these people are speaking about socialism!

IH: I read your new book *The Diary of a Snail*, and a lot of it is very close to the things that Mike and I believe in. But just because the kind of approach that you advance, that is to say, a more militant and more left-wing version of social democracy, just because it is reasonable, can it satisfy the semireligious hungers, the apocalyptic needs of young people? Sometimes I feel that many young people turned to the New Left rather than to our kind of politics because they wanted something that was not reasonable, but rather something extreme, with a kind of religious intensity. The question can be put in a simple way, is it possible for a young person to fall in love with a snail?

GG: That is difficult to say—so long as they don't know how erotic a snail can be . . . I tried to describe that in my book. But my only answer is that I am against all "final goals" because they are religious, like paradise in heaven and like paradise on earth, and they are all puritan. They always *push* people to be happy. There is some similarity between the kind of puritan Communism I have seen in the Soviet Union and elsewhere and the American Way of Life. They all tell people, You have to be happy! Look how marvelous life is—speak about love—don't speak about death! I am against this because it draws a picture without knowledge of the human being, without knowledge of the paradoxical misconstructions in that human being.

IH: Let me push that problem a little further. I see two questions here. One of them is this, that we are living in a time when the traditional religions aren't very strong, and don't function very well, especially among young people. But it seems that young people still have what I call religious emotions. They still have religious hungers, and when they can't express them in traditional religious terms or through religious institutions, they tend to divert them into polit-

ical channels. When this happens, it seems to me, people of our politics are in trouble. We are not able really to satisfy those kinds of hungers. . . .

But let me raise a different question. In your book you write a great deal about your experiences while campaigning for the Social Democrats. Could you tell us something about the kind of reception you got while you were involved in politics in the election campaign? How were you received by the old-line party apparatus, the old Social Democrats? How did they feel about you? Were they suspicious? Were they friendly? And what was it like when you came in contact with workers, what kind of response did you get there? That is, to what extent was there a kind of anti-intellectual suspicion of you among workers, or to what extent did they feel good to have another friend, Günter Grass, the writer—and did they say, We must work with him as well as we can?

GG: In the beginning, in '45, a lot of old Social Democrats thought that whatever they didn't organize themselves couldn't work. And they were very surprised to find that what some students, intellectuals, and artists did was well-organized and very successful.

In the beginning, the people we reached were what we call "Bildungsbürger"—intellectual, "cultured" bourgeois people who read books. Most of them were conservative. But we found a way to reach them, to educate these rather conservative people, who didn't want Strauss, and so on. And we did something the party had not been able to do—we reached people who had never been in contact with the Social Democratic party, had never attended Social Democratic party meetings or come out for the SPD in elections.

Then in '69, and in the last election much

more, we made contact with workers, and for the first time with Catholic workers. The Social Democratic party in West Germany, to begin with, is more Protestant than Catholic—and reaching Catholic workers was a new thing. For Willy Brandt, too, it is very difficult to function politically in Southern Germany, in the Catholic milieu. And now a lot of politically engaged young Catholics were coming along—and we could help. And we wrote informative material especially for these Catholic workers who had been in the left wing of the Christian Democratic party, but no longer saw the possibility of doing anything there.

I think that this is one of the reasons we did win these two last elections. And we also began to reach a lot of women, Catholic women, who now were changing their mind and were voting Social Democratic for the first time. We succeeded in showing some Catholics that, as Christian people, they ought to vote Social Democratic, because a Christian interested in Christian social issues will find more in the Social Democratic program than in the Christian Democratic program.

Then, after the student protest had come to an end, a lot of young people didn't want any more—dropped out of politics. But we said to them, Hold on, be patient. Let's try again! They didn't want to enter the party directly and work in it. With this kind of voter initiative there was a possibility to do something in areas where people in the party itself could not work. Most of the time we worked in little towns where the Social Democratic party is very small and badly organized, and there was a great possibility for us to help, to accomplish something. And there we reached new people, new kinds of people who did not care for the SPD yet were responding to social democratic ideas. . . .

□

Nicola Chiaromonte: The Ethic of Politics

To write about Nicola Chiaromonte is, for me, to say farewell to an old friend; and I cannot resist the temptation to try and make him come alive again, even if only for a moment, for those who may read these words. Luckily, I do not have to depend on my own limited literary powers to conjure up his presence; I can call to my aid the superb gift for evocation of André Malraux, who immortalized the essence of Nicola Chiaromonte—only the essence; not all the facts fit—in the character of Scali in *L'Espoir* (*Man's Hope*). A refugee from Fascist Italy, living in Paris in the 1930s, Nicola was a member of Malraux's squadron in the Spanish Loyalist Air Force; and it is in the pages of Malraux's great novel that he will always remain a living presence.

On Scali's first appearance in the book, what Malraux stresses is his ordinariness in the physical sense: one is not sure whether he is Spanish or Italian. "Scali's face, a bit mulattoish, was indeed common to all of the Western Mediterranean." Nicola did, in truth, have the face of an Italian peasant—as does his great friend, Ignazio Silone—and this means a face possessing all the limpidity, natural gentleness, and simple, instinctive dignity and courtesy that seem to be a quality of the race. His manner also showed some of the slowness, gravity, and deep seriousness of peasant comportment, of men who live with and close to the earth. There was nothing quick and voluble about him, nothing excitable, mobile, agitated. I met

him first in Paris, in the early 1950s, and I recall feeling how starkly he stood out among the clever, febrile French intellectuals whom I then also began to meet and very often in the same place (the salon of H. J. and Celia Kaplan, which was so important for Franco-American intellectual relations at that time). Nicola was very much a part of the French scene in those days, the days when French Existentialism was still trying to work out the foundations for a new philosophy of libertarian, democratic socialism; but one felt that he came from a different world, and that he was far less impressed with all the brilliant talk than might appear. Or at least, having fought Stalinism since the early '30s, and having been through the Spanish Civil War, he could sense where a good deal of this fascinating ratiocination was heading and where, as a matter of fact, it very soon arrived: to the acceptance of Left totalitarianism as the only possibility for the future.

One has only to turn back to Malraux's pages to understand why Nicola should have looked with some skepticism upon the atmosphere that had already produced, for example, Merleau-Ponty's sophisticated apology for Stalin's Moscow trials, *Humanism and Terror*. For what distinguishes Scali in the book is his absolute refusal, even while risking his life for a cause, to surrender his critical capacity and his moral sense. It is he who constantly pierces beneath the theories and rationalizations called forth by

the need for action in the immediate situation; it is he who asks the truly hard questions, the questions for which there is never really any answer—but the questions that must be asked if the values in whose name the action is being carried on are to have any true meaning. There is one scene in the book, during an air raid on Madrid, which must be quoted if this quality of Nicola Chiaromonte is to be understood. Scali is speaking with a senior officer, Commandant Garcia, formerly a prominent ethnologist; the horns of autos and ambulances resound in the night as they rush to the fires:

—The hour when the Valkyries choose among the dead, said Scali.

—How Madrid seems to say to Unamuno, with this blaze: what do I care about your thought, if you can't think my struggle . . . ! Let's go down. We'll go to the other office.

Garcia had just told Scali about his talk with Dr. Neubourg. Among all the men he had to see that day and night, Scali was the only one for whom that conversation had the same resonance as for himself.

—The attack on the revolution by an intellectual who was a revolutionary, Scali said, is always a questioning of revolutionary politics by . . . its ethic, if you like. Seriously, Commandant, that criticism, would you wish it not to be made?

This is the quality in Nicola Chiaromonte that made his responses so slow and hesitant, and that contrasted so sharply with the eager, self-assertive, self-confident, and ultimately self-deluding torrent of words by which he was surrounded. And this was the quality, too, that united Nicola's exterior with the special cast of his mind—the quality of getting down to what Malraux too liked to call “the fundamental,” to the simple, bedrock truth that no amount of verbiage could conceal; the quality we so often associate with those who, like the peasant, have been toughened and tempered by their encounter with everything in life that resists facile solution and easy explanation, and who, if they lack knowledge, exhibit some-

thing that has been universally recognized as wisdom. What was so unusual and so attractive about Nicola was that he had *both* knowledge and wisdom, though he valued the second much more than the first. It was this that one felt about him as he listened (he was a very good listener), his head cocked to one side, his eyes slightly closed, his lips pursed and faintly smiling—but never with a smile of superiority or condescension. Rather, one of sympathy and communion, like the smile of an older person watching young lovers and fully sharing in their joy, but from a vantage point that can see further along the road they are going to travel. No one could really be his enemy; and when his death came unexpectedly, his wife received letters of condolence from the young Italian terrorists of the *Potere Operaio* whom he had been arguing against and criticizing in his very last writings.

Nicola was not a philosopher or a literary critic in the technical sense (though for the latter part of his life he was drama critic for several Italian periodicals, and a volume of his reviews, *La Situazione Drammatica*, was published several years ago). But he was, for all that, a philosopher in the true and original meaning of the word. Quite simply, he was always thinking of the ultimate implications and the ultimate issues of the life he was living and of the world in which he found himself; and since, for most of his life, he was either an active participant in, or a close observer of, the struggles of the European Left in the era of fascism and bolshevism, his thoughts naturally turned to examining these phenomena.

All of Nicola's writings are fundamentally concerned with politics, whether or not this is his ostensible topic; and though they are often inspired by the issues of the moment, they constantly transcend this level of ephemerality because of the probing depth Nicola never failed to bring to bear on whatever he discussed. He was that rare species, especially in our time of intellectual specialization, a philosophical commentator on con-

temporary affairs; and a collection of the essays that he published in English alone (not to mention in Italian and French) would make a substantial and indispensable volume. Also, like his remarkable friend Andrea Caffi—whose book-cluttered hotel room in Paris I remember looking like something out of a story by E. T. A. Hoffmann—Nicola was an indefatigable letter-writer (though not to me, because of my own deficiencies in that regard). Nicola gleaned a fascinating series of comments and *aperçus* on society and history from Caffi's letters,¹ and I am sure that the same could be done with his own correspondence. There are a whole group of people with whom he exchanged ideas by letter over a long period of time; and because of the importance that he attributed to personal friendship as the basis for true intellectual community, I have no doubt that he poured much of the best of himself into these epistles.

Just a year or two before he died, Nicola collected a number of essays (some unpublished, and some, like the one on Malraux, long-famous), and wove them together into a book called *The Paradox of History*.² The subject of the work—which contains chapters on Stendhal, Tolstoy, Roger Martin du Gard, Malraux, and Pasternak—is Nicola's perennial theme, which, as we have seen, obsessed him even in the midst of the most violent action: the relation of politics and ethics. By the paradox of history, Nicola actually means the paradox of politics in the sense that he understands it. For the politics of the Left in the modern world has been dominated by the view that human history had a meaning, and that, as a result, history could be mastered and controlled and made to serve the purposes of the ethical ideals

that the Left was presumably struggling to put into practice. But the paradox of history is that things never turn out as they should; and ever since the modern world began with the French Revolution, these *ideals* have always been betrayed in the effort to convert them into realities. It is this paradox, and the lessons that might be drawn from it, that Nicola sets out to examine in a group of works where, in each case, the central subject is that of the relation of the individual to history.

The book begins at exactly the right place: with Stendhal's famous depiction, in *The Charterhouse of Parma*, of Fabrice del Dongo's confusion and bewilderment at the battle of Waterloo. For this is the point in time when History with a capital H enters into the consciousness of modern man; when it becomes a dominating ideology taking the place formerly held by Providence; and when, as a result, man's relation to it begins to assume all the ambiguity and paradoxicality that has always plagued his thoughts about the older, religious idea. Why History should have suddenly emerged at this moment has been well explained by Georg Lukács in his book on *The Historical Novel*—a work that deals with the same problem as Nicola's from a directly opposite point of view. For Lukács was persuaded, at least at the time he wrote his book (1936), that Marxism in its Stalinist incarnation had really solved the problem of History, and that it did not contain any paradoxes or ambiguities at all. However that may be, his explanation of the rise of the new historical self-consciousness is an independent insight:

It was the French Revolution, the revolutionary wars and the rise and fall of Napoleon, which for the first time made history a *mass experience*, and moreover on a European scale. . . . And the quick succession of these upheavals gives them a qualitatively distinct character, it makes their historical character far more visible than would be the case in isolated, individual instances: the masses no longer have the impression of a "natural occurrence."

¹ Andrea Caffi, *A Critique of Violence* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1970), trans. by Raymond Rosenthal, Introduction by Nicola Chiaromonte.

² Nicola Chiaromonte, *The Paradox of History* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1971).

Hegel, when he saw Napoleon at Jena, knew immediately that he was looking at the *Weltgeist* on horseback; and this same confidence in his ability instantly to grasp the inner significance and meaning of historical events was also displayed by Hegel's greatest pupil, Karl Marx. But poor Fabrice del Dongo, who wanted to become a part of History in the grand style, and to participate in the battle of Waterloo at the side of his hero Napoleon, is fearfully disillusioned by the attempt; and the famous scene in which this disillusion is expressed becomes the source of another tradition. This is the tradition that Nicola studies and defines in his book for the first time—the tradition which, in opposition to that of Hegel and Marx, constantly juxtaposes individual experience against historical abstraction, and, whether ironically or tragically, stresses the eternal disparity between the two. To illustrate the difference between these two traditions in literary terms, Nicola makes an extremely effective comparison between Stendhal and Hugo. In *Les Misérables*, Hugo explains the defeat at Waterloo by declaring that “Napoleon had been denounced in Infinity, and his fall has been decided.” This is a different version of the *Weltgeist* from that of Hegel or Marx; but the relation of Hugo to History as the new, up-to-date version of Providence is essentially the same.

For Stendhal, the Waterloo episode is merely a backdrop to the history of Fabrice; despite his remarkable literary foreshadowing of the problem of the individual's relation to History, Stendhal was not profoundly concerned with this issue. But the same is not true of *War and Peace*, with its laborious and painfully elaborate appendices detailing Tolstoy's intellectual wrestlings with the dilemma it poses. It is Isaiah Berlin's brilliant essay, *The Hedgehog and The Fox*, which has made us all newly aware of the importance for Tolstoy of the question of History; and this essay provided Nicola with the point of departure for his own reflections. No modern writer has presented the

tension between the individual and history, between private life and social experience, on such a vast scale as Tolstoy. Sir Isaiah drives this point home with his accustomed eloquence and authority; but Nicola thinks that he does not quite put the issue in the right way. “He [Tolstoy] was by nature a fox,” Berlin writes, “but believed in being a hedgehog,” i.e., he was endowed with an almost superhuman gift for apprehending the unique, the individual, the concrete, but yearned for an overall, general, abstract theory.

For Nicola, however, it is inaccurate to believe that Tolstoy wanted to discover some sort of independent variation of the philosophy of History in the old sense. Instead, his real achievement is to have indicated the limits of *all* historical understanding, and to have pointed to the fact of the ultimate irrationality and unknowability of human life and human action.

This position implied the radical rejection of the nineteenth-century idea that since the truth about human life could no longer be found in religion, in nature or in the individual, it had to be looked for in the historical adventure of man, that is, in political, warlike, or in any case violent, enterprises.

It has long been a cliché of criticism to call Tolstoy Homeric and to refer to the “epic quality” of his work; the comparison is one that he made himself in telling Gorky that *War and Peace* resembled *The Iliad*. Ordinarily, critics stress the literary similarities implied in such a comparison; but Nicola, with a little help from Simone Weil, goes a good deal deeper. Simone Weil called *The Iliad* “a poem about force,” and said that “force” was its real hero. She also spoke about the way in which the Greeks “geometrized” force, meaning by this their sense of how power could be misused, and the inevitable punishment suffered by those who misused it. For the modern, however, the use of power is no longer seen as a difficult and dangerous task involving grave moral responsibilities. Force is now felt, ac-

cording to Nicola, as “essentially a physical, quantitative affair, a certain amount of power, the more of which one has at his disposal, the more good one is in a position to do to oneself and society as well.”

The importance of Tolstoy, and the profound root of his “epic quality,” is that he was the first modern writer to feel again the terrible ambiguity of force as the Greeks had done, and “to raise the problem of force as a moral, not a physical, fact.” And just as Tolstoy recaptured this pre-Christian attitude to force, so too he revived a sense of all the dark, mysterious powers that govern and control human life, and which, whether we call them Moira, Ananke, Nemesis, the divine, the sacred—or, more recently, Being—pose an ultimate limit and ultimate challenge to man’s self-confidence that he is master of his destiny. “There is nothing stronger in us” Nicola writes, “nothing we know with more certainty than this force about which we know nothing.”

Tolstoy is really at the center of Nicola’s book because his is the most powerful and overwhelming onslaught ever made against modern man’s belief that he can control and master History. But another blow of this kind—one which strikes even more directly against the modern, political variety of this dogma—was delivered by Martin du Gard’s too-little appreciated *Les Thibault*. What interests Nicola in this novel, particularly in the final section, *Summer, 1914*, is the detailed depiction of the events leading up to the outbreak of the First World War.*

These events, which led to the breakdown of the First International, marked the end of socialism as the last, surviving form of faith in the rationality of History. For socialism, in its prebolshevik form, was not only a set of ideas about society or an economic doctrine: “confidence in socialism implies

confidence in a more general principle.” This principle is simply the conviction that there is no discontinuity between “nature and conscience”; it assumes “a pre-established harmony” between the two “whose operations theoretical reason is supposed to reveal and practical reason not to hinder.” Defeats and setbacks may occur; there is no puerile optimism that the right will always triumph; but the important thing is that the road to the future is clear, well-marked, and unmistakably inscribed in the very order both of the development of the world and of human conscience.

It was this faith that was shattered by the division and helplessness of the socialists in face of the looming catastrophe of the greatest war in history. Even more important, those in the bourgeois world itself—those who controlled the reins of power—were equally helpless and equally broken by the onrushing juggernaut. The highly placed diplomat at the Quai d’Orsay, Rumelles, explains that the major powers are all similarly in the grip of a force they cannot control. All they can do is to *pretend* (like Prince Bagration in *War and Peace*) to dominate a situation that has totally escaped from their grasp. Despite their opposition, both the bourgeoisie and the socialists, before 1914, had lived in the same kind of world—a world based on the faith that, in the last analysis, their own private aims and the objective order of things would coincide in some fashion; but the war soon made this belief “incredible.”

There is one character in *Les Thibault*, the professional revolutionary Meneystrel, who welcomes the outbreak of the conflict, and who, indeed, views it as a golden opportunity for his cause. For Meneystrel, the “ideal” content of socialism—its ethical aims and its humanism, which the revolution is supposed to actualize—had long since ceased to have any importance, and had been replaced by the will to act in a world where nature and conscience were no longer in any sort of harmony. What would the aim

* Part of Nicola Chiaromonte’s essay on *Les Thibault* appeared in the November–December 1970 DISSENT.

of such action be? "The answer could even be 'Socialism,' " Nicola writes, "if one means by it a social order which is not only egalitarian, but also authoritarian, the only conceivable one, given the conditions of modern society." This is the world in which the heroes of Malraux act out their tragic destiny and go to their doom.

These heroes, as Nicola perceptively puts it, "are fascinated by the contingency of history, not by its rationality." They ally themselves with the Communists because "an event to which a certain kind of intellectual dignity cannot be attributed does not interest him [Malraux]." But they are not *really* revolutionaries because the deed itself has become more important for them than its supposed rationale, and a will to action has replaced all other values. The high point of a Malraux novel is invariably the moment at which the hero realizes that he no longer can give intellectual assent to his cause, but *precisely for this reason* decides to continue to fight for it: all Malraux's protagonists are thus "nihilists with a cause." And the situation of his defeated "conquerors" exposes what Nicola calls "the great heresy of our time: the attempt to control force by becoming its servant." This is of course not all that Nicola has to say about Malraux, in this revised and shortened version of a justly famous essay; some of his other formulations are of classic quality, and will certainly be endlessly repeated in the future. But in this essay, I want to confine myself to the main line of his argument.

The last two chapters are devoted to some reflections on *Dr. Zhivago*, and to a concluding summary whose burden is expressed in its title: "An Age of Bad Faith." Nicola was deeply moved by Pasternak's book, but also troubled and disturbed by its ambiguities; and his pages on this enigmatic masterpiece are among the most interesting and searching I have seen. He is, of course, unqualifiedly sympathetic to Pasternak's basic symbolic contrast of the private and the public, the individual and the social, which

undercuts all of revolutionary ideology and reaffirms the sacredness of values (art, friendship, spiritual independence) that no political movement can accept as predominant.

In this sense Pasternak is Tolstoyan; but he does not separate off peace and nature as sharply as Tolstoy did from war and history. He sometimes assimilates History to nature, and, sometimes, views it in terms derived from what Nicola calls "a rational-mystical interpretation of Christianity" (whose roots can be found in the Russian semi-Gnostic tradition of religious Messianism represented by Dostoevsky, Vladimir Soloviev, and Berdyaev). What disquiets Nicola about Pasternak is that he finds no way of uniting these ideas with the experiential texture of the novel, or even of giving them some sort of unity and consistency in themselves. He finds the authentic truth of Pasternak not in such ideas, but—and this is a brilliant flash of insight—in the magical incantation of a peasant sorceress, converting the terrifying events of History into a folk poetry of the supernatural whose roots lie deep in Russia's pagan past.

With Pasternak (and, one should add, with Solzhenitsyn, whose works Nicola did not live long enough to take into account), the literary tradition initiated by Stendhal has proven itself to be one of the most vital of our time; nothing produced by the opposing tradition that Lukács studied can compare with it in creative vitality and achievement. At the same time, the paradox of History—the gap between aims and accomplishment, between ideal and reality—has never been more glaring and self-evident. Ours is an age of nihilism and bad faith, Nicola concluded, because we try to conceal this truth from ourselves; we still continue to believe in History, even though this belief has long since been emptied of any inner content or ethical substance. "The bad faith and nihilism of the modern world is nothing other than acceptance of the empty form of what was once authentic belief in the

absence of other beliefs that can be wholeheartedly embraced." To be more exact, the myth of History has really been replaced by that of material progress, and by a surrender of any view of man other than as "an animal . . . completely absorbed in the satisfaction of his appetites and in unlimited self-aggrandizement, at the same time that he is a slave to the needs of the species as expressed by the claims of the social machine." This view causes a great deal of uneasiness, and inspires much talk about "alienation," the "absurd," and modern "anguish"; but any principled opposition to it is condemned in the name of "modernity," "science," and "reality"—the same old myth of History reduced now simply to being modish and up-to-date.

Nicola's book, as I think should be clear by now, is far more than just a work of literary criticism; or to put it less deprecatingly, like all good criticism it is inspired by an interest in literature that is not merely "literary." For the book is very good criticism, and a real contribution to the understanding of the modern tradition. No one before has picked out, defined, and analyzed so discerningly this antihistorical line of novelists on which Nicola focuses; no one has ever seen it as a unity, and situated it in terms of the developing social-historical experience of the last 150 years; this Nicola has done, and it is an original and permanent accomplishment. It will now be impossible in the future to overlook this line of writers, or to neglect the position they represent and the problems they raise. But Nicola could not have become as involved with them as he was if he had not been concerned with the relation of politics and ethics, and with the question of the ultimate source of values in the modern world.

Mary McCarthy, describing the impression Nicola made on his American left-wing friends when he arrived as an exile in the early '40s, said that

he brought in more radical ideas and gave us the background, or rather the philosophical basis of politics. With him we went back over all the stages of political theory, from Trotskyism to Marxism, going even further back to Proudhon and the utopians of the eighteenth century.

In *The Paradox of History*, Nicola continues his never-ending exploration of "the philosophical basis of politics," and reaffirms his commitment to his own version of the revolutionary tradition—one that clings stubbornly to the original moral component of the utopian vision, and has always refused to surrender to the demands of left-wing *Realpolitik*. What is so moving about Nicola's book is what was so impressive about him as a person—the moral passion that one feels in every line; the unwillingness to lose sight of, or betray, the simple, humble, pathetic bedrock realities of human experience; the refusal to surrender the substance of the socialist dream to the play of vast historical forces or the compulsive grip of iron-clad ideologies. One thinks, while reading Nicola, of the poor peasants, the *cafoni*, in Silone's novels, who always oppose the human lessons they have learned so bitterly in their own lives against the rigidity of doctrinaire party lines. One thinks, too, of the strong ethical, moral and personal-anarchic strain that has always been such a distinctive feature of the Italian liberal and radical tradition since the Risorgimento. Both the young terrorists who wrote to Miriam Chiaromonte and Nicola himself were part of this tradition; this is why he spoke to them, and, even more crucial, this is why they listened; this is why he never gave up hope.

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Alfonso J. Damico

In Defense of Amnesty

For America the war in Vietnam has ended, but exile continues for those who refused to participate in the war. The fate of the 75,000 to 125,000 men in exile will be determined, in part, by the outcome of the public debate over amnesty. Amnesty would restore their freedom to live in America by setting aside the punishment for their political offenses. A conservative president insists, however, that draft resisters and deserters pay the price for their lawlessness. And conservative thinkers such as Ernest van den Haag charge that amnesty would undermine the law-making and law-enforcement powers of the state. Van den Haag warns that democracy itself is endangered by the amnesty campaign.

Critical to such conservative attempts to discredit the movement for amnesty is the argument that lawbreaking must always be punished. If the conservative notices the difference between common crimes and political offenses, he is likely to dismiss it as irrelevant. All illegal acts, it is contended, must be punished. I will argue that the assumptions behind this position are largely groundless, the warnings exaggerated, and the political posture too legalistic and, consequently, insensitive to values other than punishment.

THE MOST persuasive appeal in the criticisms of amnesty is to the ideal of impartiality, the hallmark of the rule of law. Through their actions, it is argued, the exiles gained advantages or avoided disadvantages that others did not enjoy or avoid. If justice is impartial, it seemingly demands that those who avoid duties they shared with others be prosecuted and punished. While I have no quarrel with many of the val-

ues associated with the phrase "rule of law," I think the phrase can lead to a major pitfall. Namely, support for the general principle of impartiality does not justify the conclusion that partiality or differential treatment must always do more harm than good. Rule of law can too easily become a slogan for collapsing political disputes into judicial topics. If punishment of lawbreakers is one principle for guiding our behavior, it obviously is not the only one. Supporters of amnesty readily admit that amnesty means that the exiles would be treated differently from other men, more exactly, other lawbreakers. The arguments for amnesty are arguments for differential treatment. The complaint, for example, that draft evaders and deserters increased other men's odds for service could also be made against every religious conscientious objector. In recognizing the refusal of religious objectors to serve, the government and public are treating *them* differently. The proposal to grant amnesty argues for a similar recognition of the exiles' refusal to serve in this war. All such acts of recognition involve treating some different from others. The ideal of impartiality built into the rule of law does not mean that we are prohibited from ever calculating the unusual case.

Baldly stated, partiality is at times preferable to impartiality. Cities, for example, have found no difficulty in setting aside the letter of the law that prohibits strikes by public employees, so as to arrive at an agreement whereby the trash can be collected again, fires fought, or the streets patrolled. While the violation of law makes it permissible for the state to punish someone, the state is not compelled to exercise this right. Considerations of kindness, doubts

about the morality of the war, support for the conscientiously disobedient as well as obedient citizen, all sorts of judgments can support the decision not to impose punishment. And at a time when the majority of the American public has expressed doubts about the Vietnam policy, it is no longer fitting that the exiles be punished simply for their political position.

Administration officials testifying before a Senate hearing on amnesty argued that amnesty now would increase the likelihood of resistance to future military involvements. With this criticism, the brief against amnesty moves from the past to the future, retribution to deterrence. It can neither be proven nor disproven. But one has to ignore a great deal to believe it. Previous amnesties did not hamper later war efforts in America or in other countries that have an even more generous history of the granting of amnesty. Nor does punishment provide much hope for discouraging war resisters. The severe penalties imposed for violations of the Selective Service Act during World War II had little, if any, effect in persuading men to comply with the law. Courts that were strict in imposing penalties had as many cases before them as lenient courts. What we can believe is that if the United States decides to pursue another war like Vietnam, resistance is likely regardless of whether amnesty is granted or withheld today. Those who fear that amnesty will undermine the deterrent effect of punishment fail to understand the conviction of men who say "no" to their government.

What opponents of amnesty are asking is that we treat the abstract possibility that amnesty *might* encourage future resistance to war as though it were already an established fact and then to make this "fact" a ground for withholding amnesty. But in calculating the consequences of amnesty, as of any policy, remote possibilities must give way to immediate and clear political benefits.

LET US TURN to a set of more strictly philosophical commentaries on the rule of law and disobedience which argue that in the interest of law, disobedience must always be punished. While the exiles are not civil disobedients in the traditional sense—they have not acted publicly (although their actions could not avoid detection), nor have they accepted the legal consequences of their refusal to obey the law

—they have by their actions affirmed that other values are more important to them than law-abidingness.

In an essay in a collection on amnesty, *When Can I Come Home?*, and in his more recent *Political Violence and Civil Disobedience*, Ernest van den Haag presents what amounts to a legalistic manifesto. The integrity of the law, in this view, demands that lawbreakers always be punished. Law, van den Haag clearly believes, is more important than politics—a position that seems to blind him to the politics behind the law. Legalism, in effect, builds a house with only one room: law enforcement. Much can be said for this mansion, but not nearly so much as van den Haag imagines.

Van den Haag's first legalism appears in his polemical essay attacking the idea of amnesty. He writes,

I am simply saying that the government that makes a law cannot say that this law can be defied with impunity by anyone who thinks it wrong. The law would no longer be a law, it would become an option, a suggestion, that you can either accept or not. It is the nature of laws that disobedience must be excluded.

All of this is perfectly correct; it is just that it has nothing to do with the amnesty issue. From the observation that a law must exclude disobedience, it does not follow that a government is prohibited in a given instance from making the political judgment not to invoke the penalties of the law. If van den Haag could show that the state is under some form of obligation always to punish a violation of the law, his argument would have some merit. Lacking such a proof, which I do not think can be made, his complaint is simply beside the point. In any case, amnesty does not set aside the law, it sets aside prosecution under the law.

Van den Haag also resorts to legalistic hyperbole. Disobedience, he argues, is an attack upon democracy. Criticizing amnesty, he writes that "In a democracy . . . what I am doing by not obeying the law is defying the majority in favor of a minority view. And I am not in favor of a minority dictatorship." Such an argument faces the pitfall of pernicious abstractions that the historian Henry Steele Commager warned us might arise in the debates over amnesty. Van den Haag is in too great a rush to equate disobedience to a particular law or defiance of a specific policy with dictatorial rule of the few over the many.

The conservative's position makes sense once we see that he is opposed to amnesty because it is a *political*, not a legal, judgment. To argue that lawbreakers must always be punished is the legalist's way of "protecting" the law from the controversies occurring in the political community. In attempting to make the law immune to the uncertainties of politics, van den Haag translates the political dispute over opposition to the Vietnam war into a judicial question of legal right and wrong. His position is only a more rigorous reflection of the attitude that the exiles, whatever the merits of their political and moral arguments, must be penalized for violating the law. Presented as a demand for the impartial enforcement of the law, the argument obscures the political bias of amnesty's opponents. It is an assertion that the law supporting the government's politics must automatically take precedence over the politics of the government's opponents. The argument exaggerates the anarchic potential of non-violent political resistance and overlooks the responsibilities of the government. John Locke argued a more balanced view when he responded to charges that the teaching that government derives its powers from the consent of the governed would encourage disobedience and rebellion:

To this, perhaps, it will be said, that the people being ignorant and always discontented, to lay the foundations of government in the unsteady opinion and uncertain humour of the people is to expose it to certain ruin. . . . To which I answer, quite the contrary. . . . For till the mischiefs be grown general, and the ill designs of the rulers become visible, or their attempts sensible to the greater part, the people, who are more disposed to suffer than right themselves by resistance, are not apt to stir. The examples of particular injustice or oppression of here and there an unfortunate man moves them not. But if they universally have a persuasion grounded upon manifest evidence that designs are carrying on against their liberties, and the general course and tendency of things cannot but give them strong suspicions of the evil intention of their governors, who is to be blamed for it? Who can help it if they, who might avoid it, bring themselves into this suspicion?

When consent is withdrawn by an isolated individual here and there, it is likely to remain a legal rather than a political and public problem. But when consent is withdrawn by large numbers, attention must shift from the legal to the political arena. And Locke reminds us

that a major responsibility of any democratic government is to evaluate the likely effects of its policies upon the social agreement necessary for the rule of law to work. When its policies are such as to undermine the public desire to be rule-following, it must accept much of the blame for the divisions within the country. The government must, then, pick up the responsibility for reconciling those divisions, if it is to remove itself from under "this suspicion." Politics is more important than law for the success of democracy.

Meriting more serious consideration is van den Haag's argument that the willingness to accept punishment for disobeying the law is necessary for a political offender to demonstrate his serious moral intent and his fidelity to the larger social order. The example of Socrates who refused to obey the laws of his society but acknowledged the state's authority to punish him is often cited, by liberals as well as conservatives, as an instance of disobedience combined with loyalty to the state. By voluntarily submitting to arrest, the civil disobedient does not call into question the state's authority over him. The exiles' disobedience, although nonviolent, occasions greater alarm because the potential for political instability is greater where men defy the state's right to judge them. Van den Haag's account of uncivil disobedience apparently forces the democrat to choose between either punishing the exiles for their convictions or undermining the effectiveness and authority of democratic government by an anarchic precedent permitting defiance of the state. If we are, indeed, faced with such an either/or choice, amnesty will have to give way to the greater good of political order.

But are we faced with such a Hobbesian dilemma? Abstractly, the answer is yes. But it is the very abstractness of the answer that distorts the discussion of amnesty. What van den Haag's analytical account cannot show is that amnesty *would* become a precedent encouraging general disobedience. It is a possibility not simply to be dismissed, but amnesty's critics wrongly imagine that the abstract warning settles the political problem of whether amnesty, in light of political realities, would do more good than harm. No real evidence has been offered to show that we are, in fact, confronted with advancing one political value by seriously

damaging another. The war is over, conscription has been abolished, illegal political resistance has stopped: in this climate, amnesty would free us, with very little risk of political chaos, of having to imprison the exiles for refusing to take part in a war that they considered immoral. There is less long-range political risk in amnesty than in the attitude that state authority is a value that must supercede all others.

Political accommodations embrace conflicting values and politics involves some willingness to live with the tension between different goods. The debate over amnesty will be distorted if political judgments are replaced by abstract ethical or legal rules. One writer, for instance, who favors setting aside the prosecution of political resistance, argues that the government acts wrongly when it enforces one of its laws against a claim that it had no moral right to adopt the law. Van den Haag, accepting the terms of the discussion, persuasively argues that the individual has no such "right" against the government but only a moral "claim." From this reasonable position, he then concludes that the law must always be enforced. But in what sense does this conclusion follow? To say that the exiles or any other political offender has no legal or moral right to disobey the law does not yet answer the political question posed by amnesty. Amnesty is a political recommendation that urges the setting aside of prosecution in specific circumstances. The very merit of amnesty is that it is an exception to the general rule that lawbreaking must be punished. Amnesty both acknowledges and sets aside the general rule in a given instance for the sake of other benefits.

To fully grasp the appropriateness of amnesty as a response to the rupture in the American social contract, it is finally necessary to go beyond the terms traditionally used by the supporters or opponents of political resistance. I have in mind Hannah Arendt's argument in her recent book *Crises of the Republic* that most discussions of political offenses are not political enough. Writing about civil disobedience, she argues that:

The greatest fallacy in the present debate seems to me that assumption that we are dealing with individuals, who pit themselves subjectively and conscientiously against the laws and customs of the community. . . . The fact is that we are

dealing with organized minorities who stand against assumed and nonvocal, though hardly "silent" majorities. . . . It has been the misfortune of recent debates that they have been dominated largely by jurists—lawyers, judges, and other men of law—for they must find it difficult to recognize the civil disobedient as a member of a group rather than to see him as an individual lawbreaker, and hence a potential defendant in court.

Arendt's comments remind us that the stability of democratic government requires something more than the state's ability to punish. There must be some consensual base upon which the political structure rests and from which it draws support. A society of consent does not simply mean majority rule or electoral politics. Those who employ the language of a contract to argue that the individual makes an agreement with the government, to obey the law in return for certain services, are inclined to forget that the success of the contract depends upon a prior consensus—namely, a widespread desire and support for the continuation of the political community. This good faith can be seen in the willingness of the losers in an electoral contest to abide by the choice of the winners; the losers accept the choice of the majority not because the majority's choice is their choice but because they value the general good of law-abidingness or, more exactly, the community sustained by law-abidingness. But each man must feel that he has some stake in the community and that the political system is open and fair.

The core of the social compact is the feeling of reciprocity, the belief that, as regards our rights and duties, good faith is being kept with us. Good faith depends strongly upon government power conforming to the expectations that we have about how power will be exercised, expectations influenced by the form of the constitution and the ethos of democracy. Loyalty and the general will for the rule of law are linked to the belief that decisions are being made in conformity with the social compact. Conformity to these expectations becomes more, not less, critical when the government changes the country from a state of peace to a state of war. Extraordinary politics that involve challenges to the legitimacy of the government's authority occur when men are left with the feeling that the government's decisions are in no way their decisions, a feeling re-

flected in the belief that the Vietnam war was "Johnson's war" or "Nixon's war." It is not a question of having your view always prevail, but the awareness that it matters that you have a view.*

The crisis of authority in America cannot be understood apart from the origin and prosecution of the Vietnam war. Consistent Administration "understatements" about the nature and costs of American involvement in Vietnam, the debasement of political language, the antiseptic account of military tactics, lies about the nature and scope of the war, especially the bombing: by such assaults on the political community the American government has endangered its legitimacy. It can be said about the effects of the Vietnam war on American governments what was said about the disastrous consequences of the Peloponnesian war for ancient Athens:

Lacking a sense of honor, people no longer behaved honorably but masked their behavior with fine words. The old love of serious argument was debased into ingenious dispute, by which the most despicable actions were made to appear excellent. The old admiration for intellectual prowess degenerated into a respect for a certain kind of craftiness, the ability to advance a cause by whatever means came to mind.

While particular laws are often casualties in a season of confrontation politics, the final confrontation is with the character of the political community. Disillusionment and mistrust of American government steadily increased during the Vietnam war years. At issue now are the terms upon which government authority will be reconstituted. There is no reason why America cannot continue without the exiles. They can be forgotten; the social fabric, al-

* Proceduralism, the conformity of decision-making to customary political norms and constitutional patterns, will also affect the quality of the decisions reached. The political significance of the debate over the constitutionality of the war is that the requirement that Congress declare war increases the probability that the concerns and interests of the public, especially opponents of a policy, will be one of the pressures that enters into the calculations of the government. Although it cannot be proven that adherence to this requirement would have prevented the disaster in Vietnam, the myriad attempts by various Administrations to manipulate public opinion suggest that they would have felt constrained to act differently in a more open political system.

though permanently disfigured by their absence, can mend without them. The point is that America will be one type of society if it grants amnesty and another type if it does not. A democracy can never permanently solve the tension between a man's general obligation to be law-abiding and his competing obligations and convictions. But when men are caught up in the conflict between what the state demands and what their convictions permit, an effort should be made to reach a reconciliation with them so that the political good is, as far as possible, a common good. When punishment will serve no valuable purpose, the good of democracy is enhanced by refusing to coerce the other man's conscience. □

Leo P. Ribuffo

Watergate & Mugwumps

As a former Connecticut resident who voted against Lowell Weicker, I was particularly fascinated by his conduct during the first phase of the Watergate hearings, and by the favorable impression he made among liberal commentators. No one seems to remember his race against Joseph Duffey in 1970, the year of Spiro Agnew's exhortations against radical liberals and the sinister forces behind them. While the Vice-President called Duffey a "revisionist Marxist"—a category even more ominous than radical liberal—Weicker worked hard to identify with the Administration. Having been chairman of the Americans for Democratic Action and a supporter of the notorious Eugene McCarthy, Duffey proved particularly vulnerable to innuendo. To the best of my recollection, as the saying goes, Weicker never publicly

criticized Agnew's tactics; like the men he recently interrogated, he preferred to look the other way.

If Weicker had paused to hear Joe Duffey's warnings, he would have learned before last spring that officials aren't always fastidious in their definitions of disloyalty. If Weicker was unaware that his advocates alluded to Duffey's "radicalism," then he knew as little about his campaign as Nixon supposedly knew about doings at the Committee to Re-elect the President. If, during their motorcade to Hartford, Weicker had asked Nixon about his early career, he would not have been surprised that presidential appointees considered unorthodox seditious. The Senator has said that Republicans don't think of their "fellow Americans as enemies to be harassed," for which he received sustained applause. Yet without the votes of citizens favoring such harassment, Mr. Weicker would have been no closer to the hearings than his TV set in Greenwich.

Weicker's recent concern for free expression, like that of many public figures, is well-intentioned and, to some extent, heartening. But his apparent conviction that incursions on freedom have begun recently, or that they are infrequent actions by errant individuals, leads in the wrong direction. High officials have abused our liberties for a long time, and the abuse has regularly been rationalized. The Roosevelt administration unleashed the Internal Revenue Service on insurgent Huey Long while loyal Frank Hague stuffed his wallet in Jersey City; authorities tell us that this was an example of FDR's political sagacity. The Truman administration revoked press credentials and passports from its critics; authorities tell us that this was an unfortunate Cold War excess. For 25 years the fear of subversion has been manipulated for political advantage by both Republicans and Democrats. By failing to associate recent buggings, phone taps, enemy lists, tax audits, and break-ins with that tradition, Weicker symbolizes the prevalent tunnel vision regarding Watergate.

IT is an established American habit to interpret political trickery simply in terms of personal immorality. Lowell Weicker is reminiscent of the 19th-century genteel reformers who considered public affairs a contest between honest men and corrupt bosses—swarthy immigrants who bought some votes and neglected to count

others. The careers of the "mugwumps" should have taught us that honesty is not enough. These men of rectitude despised President Grant's attorney general who was on the take, but admired Cleveland's, who only had strikers shot down. There is a grotesque parallel in recent pronouncements by such men as Barry Goldwater. After supporting the President while he lied about a war, they would consider impeaching him for lying about a break-in. Apparently obstruction of justice qualifies as a "high crime"; obstruction of peace does not. The conservative position has its own consistency, but liberal journalists should not be so quick to equate it with virtue.

By viewing the Ervin investigation as the biggest morality play in town, not only do we applaud unlikely heroes, but we interpret Watergate too narrowly. Repeatedly, Weicker and his fellows asked in real or feigned amazement: "How could a man like *you* have done it?" as if interrogator and witness dwelled in separate moral realms. If the senators had put aside their obsession with individual culpability to listen, they would have usually heard plausible explanations. Having been willing to invade the sovereign nation of Cuba at the behest of one president, James McCord could not be expected to balk at invading a mere office building when the plan had White House sanction. There are obvious differences between a private citizen's open act of civil disobedience and an official's secret machinations, but Jeb Magruder's comparison between himself and William Sloane Coffin must not be dismissed. The Watergate second-story men, Ronald Reagan rightly observed, were not ordinary criminals. Considering George McGovern the latest apostle of infidelity to the American way, burglars and perjurers alike acted out of conscience for ideological reasons.

The congealing conventional wisdom absolves Republican professionals and blames Watergate on White House amateurs (a category that may, somehow, include the President). To take seriously the ideological dimension of Senate testimony would erode the cagey distinction which Howard Baker, Weicker, and Goldwater, among others, have sold to the media. The wider perspective would undermine Weicker's contention that his party, too, had been "aggrieved" by a small group of zealots. It would show that there is still room for harassers in the GOP rank-and-file, as in the

halcyon days of Jenner, Bricker, Joe McCarthy, the Old Agnew, and the Old Nixon. To reunite “good” and “bad” Republicans (Weicker’s terms), we need only recall the concerted efforts of mugwumps, stalwarts, and half-breeds to make George McGovern look like an extremist. From Hugh Scott on down, they conjured forth images of abortions in the Lincoln bedroom and acid trips instead of egg hunts on the White House lawn, as amnesty was proclaimed in the Oval Office and our defenses went to hell. For someone who accepted even a fraction of the argument, a break-in and some perjury were minor risks to rescue the Republic.

During this nationwide slur, Senator Weicker did not rise up in his now-familiar indignation to dispell the fear of subversion that nurtured Watergate. As in 1970, he preferred to look the other way. Sam Ervin and Herman Talmadge, too, did little to refute the notion that their party had been captured by weirdos. Did it occur to none of these men that a believer in the updated innuendo of 1972 might willingly—and with a sense of honor—break the law to undermine McGovern’s candidacy? Perhaps Ervin and Talmadge sometimes wonder, as I do, how Democrats would have responded in 1964 if Lyndon Johnson’s henchmen had been discovered ransacking Goldwater headquarters. To save the nation from “extremism,” like the Republicans eight years later, they probably would have exercised their capacity for silence and selective perception.

DESPITE these moral ambiguities, our historical propensity for chicanery, and our well-fed fear of subversives, the proper response to Watergate is *not* to shriek, “We are all guilty,” a popular American way of avoiding fixing responsibility. Some people are more guilty than others, and it’s hardly surprising that “dirty tricks” reached a kind of critical mass under Richard Nixon. The prosecution and the courts will eventually sort out the lawbreakers from the co-conspirators and hangers-on. In the meantime we should curb our mugwump righteousness and learn from the manifold ironies: erstwhile McCarthyites were crying “witch-hunt” though the Ervin Committee was affable and avuncular compared to the harassers of old; Governor Reagan, long oblivious to social sources of crime in Oakland or Watts, ex-

plains why breaking and entering are different in D. C.; and gentle people who despise our prison system crave John Mitchell’s incarceration. The question of retribution is especially interesting. William Buckley was right to protest the strict sentences of the Watergate burglars. Like many draft resisters (my analogy, not Buckley’s), they are susceptible to harsh punishments as symbols, not because their presence on the street endangers the rest of us. Similarly, out of office John Mitchell is no more dangerous to the commonweal than most corporate lawyers; there’s no reason to make him a martyr.

The collective *mea culpa* probably will not be the preferred way to avoid the menacing implications beneath the Watergate surface. Rather, the trend is toward an opposite, though equally venerable evasion. After the “guilty” individuals have been condemned, the nation will congratulate itself on how well the Republic functions when good men stand fast. Already pundits acclaim the Senate hearings as proof that the system works. But pride, like righteousness, must be kept under control.

Instead of ritual praise for our political culture, the break-in, cover-up, and investigation should provoke awareness of its limitations. Mary McCarthy surmised that Americans have seized on Watergate to prove, after Vietnam, that we are still a moral people. In addition to inexpensive expiation, the mugwump’s moralistic approach betrays a desire to avoid issues—notably race and the economy—about which homilies are no longer convincing.

Furthermore, Mr. Nixon’s speech of August 15th, as well as the testimony of John Ehrlichman and H. R. Haldeman, underscores how little specific meaning remains in the hallowed term “national security.” The words have scant connection with their literal meaning—the country’s safety. Excepting some obvious apocalyptic threats, our basic interests and the correct strategy to protect them are by no means self-evident to all persons of right reason and good heart. Three decades of more or less bipartisan foreign policy have made us forget that “national security” is a broadly political concept about which there is disagreement and there should be debate. Thus, when Ehrlichman chanted this totemistic incantation instead

(continued on page 123)

David Bromwich

Homage to Francois Truffaut

In a Paris street brakes screech, and a man is running: headlights skid across the dank walls of buildings. Staggering, the man escapes whatever was after him, and then finds a companion walking at his side. A friend? Just another man. They have a conversation about love, a couple of swarthy faces, at this strange hour of the night, in the middle of nowhere. The fugitive listens attentively; complaints about marriage, the usual grousing; but the new friend cannot help himself, he loves his wife. He fell in love with her the day their first child was born. But there is no time to say more and perhaps nothing more to say: the two men salute and pass into their separate lives. At last, voices from a café, which the fugitive enters, the unlucky street forgotten.

What on earth is happening? I have described the opening scene of *Shoot the Piano Player*, a film one loves the way one loves a family, and I still do not know why the episode seems to me perfect. Or rather, why it makes the idea of formal perfection seem like an affront. Neither of the two characters will be important in the story this film has to tell. One is secondary, a brother of the hero, who carries the bad blood in his family and has fallen in with gangsters. The other will not reappear. Yet the disorientation—for the characters, for the audience—does not leave anyone feeling disconnected. What one senses at the start is all that matters about Truffaut's passion for the world. And what comes through is something of its congeniality. Something of its pain. And there in the background is Truffaut with his endless variations on a single grand comment: how closely they jostle, the extremes of life, everything marvelous with everything most terrible.

At the center of Truffaut's melancholy is a wish for delighted mayhem, yet in every comic interval he allows there is a secret gravity. About the will divided against itself he can speak with unexampled authority. Another scene from *Shoot the Piano Player*: the hero, suddenly a famous pianist, finds that he can no longer tolerate a wife plainly repelled by his own egotism. He makes the announcement: "things aren't right for us anymore." She responds by telling him what she had thought never to tell: that his break came, the week before their marriage, after she had agreed to sleep with the impresario dear to them both. She has tried to separate body and soul but she is still haunted. She is repulsive to herself as she must be to him, he must leave the room and leave her forever. Stay, he tells himself; now, kiss her; save yourself. Thinking this he bolts from the room. Half-way down a long corridor he has a change of heart and races back, but it is too late: she has leaped from the window and soon a little crowd of the curious will be gathering to examine a corpse.

Even amid such cruelty one is aware mostly of the tenderness. And it is not too much to say this tenderness is a grace Truffaut has made altogether his own—sometimes it is his saving grace. *The world is awful because there are no villains*. No one to blame, singularly or definitively, and yet the tragedy remains. When an artist convinces us of this it is a sign of greatness. (Can anyone name a villain in *Anna Karenina*?) There are other films, greater than *Shoot the Piano Player* and no doubt more perfect, but I cannot return to them as often. Perhaps the strength is more public than it looks: in no other film is the shock-tempo so

perfectly adjusted to the vision of things, the condition of being a film so absolutely necessary to the ways-and-means of the story.

SHOOT THE PIANO PLAYER comes from a tradition of movies as surely as most great films have come from a tradition of painting or fiction. Ageless, it is now more than a decade old. Before it there was *The 400 Blows*, a sworn oath of loyalty to childhood, and after it two more masterpieces, *Jules and Jim* and *The Wild Child*. All these works have altered our notion of what a film can be. Renoir is a detectable influence, together with early Godard; but in a very high degree Truffaut has been his own man. Indeed, an effort like *Mississippi Mermaid*, though exhilarating over stretches, may dissatisfy as a whole because its neoclassicism all too happily adopts Truffaut as the classic. Everyone loves an original, and no one likes to see originality abused. What if the original takes a day off and pays a conscious tribute to his first father, the conventional?

The new Truffaut film is called *Day for Night* and it has been received most ungratefully. It is about the tradition of movies. But not of movie art: it is the scraping and mending, the brainstorming that really hold water, the split-second openings into grandeur, in short, the "bit"-making tradition that appeals to Truffaut. He immortalizes the whole queer business in a manner something like Fitzgerald's in *The Last Tycoon*. Vignettes from the film-within-film: two couples on balconies that face each other—only the balconies are just clever scaffoldings erected 50 feet apart—passing the time, the older inviting the younger for a visit—but, mild surprise, this works because the older ones who are supposed to be more experienced in life are in fact more experienced in acting—until the middle-aged man waxes so enthusiastic that he nearly falls off, to be saved by his wife as they exchange mock-astonished glances

and laugh across the way for their neighbors; a climactic scene shot, for last-ditch reasons, in the snow—the sequence calls for murder on a busy street—and the poetic dimension it somehow gains as a result; the minor effects, all of them—fake rain, fake bash-ups—with their larger meaning in a film that will be—larger? At least partly, oddly, memorable: like *Day for Night*.

Truffaut has always spoken with great affection about the bits put together by Hitchcock and others, as if they were a value in themselves. That they are no one who has ever amazed himself remembering part of a bad film will deny. In *Day for Night* Truffaut shows the how of this value but not the why. He is very good on the accidental things in movies: the aging star, too nervous to end a scene walking through the right door, who drinks between takes and so gets more and more brilliant playing the bitch, but she cannot find that door. This is lovely. But at bottom one realizes that what the film *Day for Night* portrays in the making is junk, and the question becomes: to what extent does Truffaut share in the recognition? Very largely, I would say. Alarming little, say a number of critics, and so saying dismiss Truffaut-as-critic when it is only the artist who ought to concern them. My own reservation is quite different. What spoils this film at the deepest level is the presence of Jean-Pierre Léaud, who has contributed to many recent Truffaut disasters. Truffaut and Léaud are friends and that is fine. Unfortunately, Truffaut is going by a legitimate but off-screen impression of Léaud, whereas on-screen the actor is maddeningly coy or pretty-pretty. As in the cartoons, someone should knock Truffaut over the head with a sledge-hammer to make him see his actor clearly.

Since this has been a love letter to Truffaut perhaps it can just be signed: grateful but still waiting. ■

In the Magazines

"Notes for Next Time: A Memoir of the 1960's, by Elinor Langer. WORKING PAPERS FOR A NEW SOCIETY, Fall 1973.

Working Papers for a New Society now has published three issues—not enough to have assumed a definite character. The magazine is published quarterly by the Cambridge Policy Studies Institute and serves as a forum for innovation in social policy. Within a loose Left framework, proposals in such areas as community organizing, workers' control, and income redistribution are discussed. Some of the contributions are quite ingenious and sophisticated, others decidedly naive. While its experimental format may or may not prove viable, *Working Papers* already has justified its existence by publishing a brilliant article by Elinor Langer.

Langer was once an activist in The Movement, a friend of such leaders as Tom Hayden and Rennie Davis. She was also a victim of some of The Movement's characteristic illusions and delusions and, as such, she writes to gain an understanding where "we" went wrong, politically and personally.

Langer's current approach to politics is intensely personal, and she realizes that such writing runs the danger of presenting a fragmented, idiosyncratic view of social life. In this case, the gains outweigh the possible distortion.

Born at the beginning of World War II, Langer grew up in an affluent, Jewish, liberal home, in Newton, Mass. Her childhood was "a fifties childhood, neutral and sentimental, separated from [her] later life by geologic fault."

In progressive Newton High, the students were reading existentialist literature of alienation and despair, decrying "organization men" and the dismaying prevalence of other-directedness in our culture; and we never suspected we, with our All-American masks and our prema-

ture anxieties, were the coming evidence of the philosophers' anxieties.

Newton equipped her to enter Swarthmore College in 1957, with "detached precocity," "immunized" from politics, disciplined for adulthood. At Swarthmore, Langer learned that she was indeed one of America's elite, intellectually and morally superior to America's business-oriented society. Those in Elinor's circle were not radical—they viewed radicalism as a symptom of intellectual shallowness. They were, however, disaffected with American culture and viewed their intellectual training as a tool to "understand" social change, not bring it about.

At the dawn of the New Frontier, they developed a "romantic" radicalism, based on a love of history, not on political experience. "I took for granted that I was meant for the cafés and barricades, and I was sorry to live in a country where affairs were so peaceably settled."

After leaving her first job at the Washington Center for Foreign Policy Research, she began a career in journalism, becoming political editor of *Science* magazine and friendly with a group of people "more or less the left wing of the Kennedy Administration" who were founding the Institute for Policy Studies. When an assignment brought her to Berkeley, to cover the Free Speech Movement in 1965, her identification with The Movement became complete.

Just as Langer joined The Movement, it was undergoing an important transition from its "American" stage to a second stage that proved to be "sectarian, irrelevant, and self-destructive." Why did SDS adopt a "Leninist" strategy of revolution?

Langer's answer is fascinating: "I do not think that we as a movement wanted to hook into the American political system and miscal-

culated, but that at some level we did not want to do so." We used "language most Americans did not understand, and tactics that they feared, on behalf of a goal they did not desire." SDSers could not come up with fresh perceptions because "we hated intellectuals. . . . Logic, evidence, proof—the tools of our training—came to seem attributes of social class alone, therefore immoral, therefore, useless."

Langer admits that few of her friends seriously applied Marxist-Leninist ideas. But the half-baked Marxism that most New Leftists adopted "gave us several ideas that I think impeded the development of a productive Left political movement." One was the idea of "false consciousness."

We used "false consciousness" cheaply, to explain away the inconvenient phenomenon that Americans were in fact bound up with the culture and the system. Our failure to admit that was the source of the idea that they could be dislodged in single, dramatic acts of terror. . . .

And there was "false internationalism":

We assumed our identification with third world countries was self-evidently justified because we had a common enemy: U.S. imperialism. . . . Our internationalism was chiefly worshipful. We made little progress in discovering what the real relationship between a U.S. radical movement and foreign countries ought to be.

LANGER THINKS that it was the New Left's use of "class analysis" that was its biggest error. The "vulgar-Marxist class analysis" they adopted had a wonderful ability to simplify political analysis. "Sometimes when I am puzzled, I consult a small pamphlet by Ernest Mandel. For about 15 minutes I am happy and relieved. I understand the classes, forces, categories. . . . But when I go outside and talk to people again, it all seems useless."

Langer believes that Marxist class analysis is outmoded because currently social mobility is real enough in America, so that workers do not think of themselves as a class. Here, I think, she mistakes what Marxism is, or can be.

Why did the New Left adopt an analysis that singled out the working class as the motive force for revolution? Langer's answer seems to be that New Leftists did not feel themselves part of a class; indeed, they felt themselves to be *not-part* of a class, largely because they did not need money, consumer goods, or jobs. The ensuing

rejection of class . . . created a sense of placelessness. It was like living in space, beyond the reach of gravity. Subjectively we felt lost, discredited by privilege, and not capable according to our own ideology of being the "agent of change" we believed we needed. . . . Feeling inexplicable, if not worthless, we began our search for an agent of change. The results of our groping for a "vanguard" were, if history is gentle with us, ridiculous.

Langer's explanation here is interesting, but not adequate; I will return to this point later. Her account indicates that the failure of the student leftists to come to grips with themselves as a social group had two important negative consequences.

First, they were forced to search for a revolutionary strategy in the works of ideologists who lived in very different circumstances. The result was that around the whole New Left, in 1967 and '68, the tendency to dogma and posture was replacing thought and analysis. "Our words armored us against the very people we needed. . . . They made us into a secret society." Langer recalls an incident in which one of her friends in the women's movement came to her "waving a copy of Shulamith Firestone's *The Dialectics of Sex* . . . crying out, 'At last we have an analysis. At last we have an analysis.' It reminded me of Peter Pan and Wendy: 'We have a mother.'"

Second, New Leftists were unable to understand their own lives or trust their own experiences. For instance, Langer explains her leaving *Science* magazine, where some of her work on chemical and biological weapons had brought her success, partly because she did not feel that being a successful journalist was compatible with being a virtuous revolutionary: "I did not trust myself or my motives. . . . I pulled away because the weight of a public identity was too heavy for me and in part because it was important to me as a woman not to succeed in too flashy a fashion."

These twin problems expressed themselves most graphically in the women's movement. The first women's group she joined, one of the early ones, turned out terribly.

It was in fact the moralistic ideas of the movement as a whole brought into my own and my friends' living rooms. . . . In my group, we tyrannized ourselves with ideas that could only destroy us. We fancied ourselves divided into "working-class women" and "middle class women". . . . Anything we "privileged" women

might somehow have needed or felt good about (a piece of work, a job, admission to graduate school) we came to despise and distrust. The radical women's movement in New York was like a permanent purge in which we always identified with those who confessed.

As the group dissolved, Elinor Langer came to see the need for self-repair. "I knew the revolution could not rest on timid neurotics like myself and powerful lunatics like the men and women I feared." For the first time, she recognized another of The Movement's major errors—the idea that "it was impossible to be happy in an unjust country" and that one therefore need not deal with personal problems.

LANGER'S ARTICLE is better on analysis of past errors than on suggestions for the future. Even so, her ideas are refreshing: "I think our best chance for a decent society is to hawk more tickets for our side: to spread out and imbed ourselves with all our demands and visions, incomplete as these may be, in every institution in the country."

Langer's analysis is weakest in its explanation of why The Movement went wrong—why Movement people circa 1963 adopted a political perspective contrary to their own perceptions and experience. Langer points to the adoption of a "class analysis" that placed movement people outside of the class struggle and thus forced them to find revolutionary "vanguards" with which to ally and identify. Surely, here Langer misses the motivation for that choice of a particular form of "class analysis."

The moral impulse behind the rebellion of the young leftists was flawed at its foundation, in two important ways. First, while the New Leftists felt themselves to be morally superior to the cynicism, materialism, and corruption of American society, which in large part was there, they did not understand that adopting such an elevated moral stance depended on secure and numerous privileges. They demanded that others share their outrage with America's corruption, without being able to understand that most Americans could not afford what they felt to be the luxury of moral purity. Workers threatened with unemployment or mortgage foreclosure, city dwellers frightened by crime, ghetto blacks struggling for stability, all these surely were not content with their lot, but they did not share the perspective of moral condemnation with the privileged young. Their lan-

guage was that of political interest rather than of moral righteousness. The arrogance bred by elite status caused many to overlook this.

But this very arrogance was mixed with self-hatred, bred by a guilty sense of privilege. This self-hatred was undoubtedly produced by a variety of social and psychological factors; let me isolate one that seems particularly compelling. The upper-middle-class family, with its ideology of parental sacrifice for the children's opportunity, an ideology that became dominant (especially among Jews) after World War II, was a crucial element in the self-hatred of young leftists of the '60s. The parents, most from humble social origins, had reached high status by devoting themselves, for the sake of "the family," to long years of remunerative but boring or morally corrupting work (including housework). They did this partly in response to the Depression experience, partly in response to a new cultural ideology. In doing so, they had to give up their desires for creative or interesting work. Inevitably, this took a toll; the parents were hostile or resentful toward the children for whom they had made their sacrifices. Since this hostility ran counter to their value system, it was repressed. The children reacted to parental hostility with hurt and hostility of their own. To some extent, this hostility was also repressed, because the parents were sacrificing so much to provide their children with opportunities. Moreover, parental repression of hostility was a model for the children. Guilt remained, and self-hatred; the children of the upper middle class hated themselves because their privileges came at such a cost. The political analysis the New Left made of itself as a privileged stratum did reflect the social and cultural situation that produced the New Left; it also reflected the guilt and self-hatred that privilege engendered.

If the New Left developed authoritarian political tendencies because of flaws inherent in its own moral impulse, how can New Leftists hope or be expected to learn from their mistakes? Elinor Langer implicitly points out an answer: self-awareness. People at war with themselves cannot be effective political leaders, nor friends, nor lovers.

If they can, on the other hand, overcome their guilt about their privileged origins, accept themselves as the product of a class subculture, with the virtues and vices that subculture car-

ries, then they can be more productive. Langer says, "Don't force yourself to be what you're not. You, as you are, can do any number of useful things."

DAVID BENSMAN □

"The Moral Crisis of the Black American," by Orlando Patterson. PUBLIC INTEREST, Summer 1973.

Why are many young and militant black sociologists turning against the research conclusions put forth by their white, liberal teachers, and against the progressive explanations of black "failure" in America they presumably should embrace? The answer, says Professor Orlando Patterson, rests with an understanding of "The Moral Crisis of the Black American": for one's position on the issue of "black failure" carries with it assumptions about the psychological set of the black American. If the black American is to treat himself, and is to be treated, as responsible for his own actions—including personal failure—then, to be consistent, he must reject sociological theories that point to external obstacles to success.

Patterson argues that sociological "determinism" is incompatible with the quest for moral autonomy. Even the theories of such liberal scholars as C. Van Woodward, Gunnar Myrdal, and Thomas Pettigrew provide him with convenient justifications for explaining away both a lack of achievement and social pathology. If, as a black man, you blame others for your failure, you relinquish your self-autonomy and subjugate yourself to white America. Patterson writes that

The advantage to the victim which determinism seems to offer turns into a Pyrrhic moral victory. By its very nature, a deterministic framework accepts and accentuates the moral superiority of the victimizer.

Instead, the black American is obliged, through a "leap of will," to accept "sole responsibility" for her or his failure. What does this responsibility entail?

To assume responsibility for oneself is to assume responsibility for one's past, one's present, and one's future. For the past, it means,

to take the most extreme example—assuming the burden of responsibility for even so horrible an experience as slavery—not its causes, not its explanation, but its responsibility. For the present, it means an acceptance of one's responsibility for all the failures—the poverty, the political impotence, the occupational lowliness—of the group.

And, again,

There can be no help from others, none whatever, not even from the kindest, most genuinely liberal hands, [for] he must solve it alone because he brought it upon himself.

Patterson specifies a variety of paths to personal moral transformation while isolating the act of existential rebellion—in the image of Camus's rebel—as the most authentic mode. A demonstration of self-autonomy, or responsibility for one's own actions, requires two steps: the refusal to accept conditions as they are (presumably both personal and social), and a commitment to change existing personal and social arrangements through personal action.

There are, says Patterson, black Americans who have achieved self-autonomy through existential rebellion. These are "successful blacks . . . who defy deterministic theories of black failure, . . . having gained their humanity, [accomplished] the much easier rebellion against their social and economic environment." Need they be the only blacks to transcend their negative self-image? Certainly not. For the experience of existential rebellion has, first and foremost, political significance.

In an apparent reversal of his position, Patterson remarks: "It may well be that the *only* way in which any meaningful change can take place among a substantial number of black Americans is through a total, *almost* revolutionary change in American society" (italics added). This restructuring of society will result from certain political actions that Patterson terms "constructive public rebellion." For Patterson, blacks, "as the most oppressed group . . . will assume the initiative in bringing about the revolutionary coalition" of ethnic groups around issues of class. We are warned, however, that blacks must achieve a personal moral transformation as a precondition to, or at least a correlate of, political revolt.

Thus Patterson sees individual moral transformation as an essential prerequisite for social and political transformation. Because of this connection, he regards as entirely legiti-

mate his black colleagues' rejection of white, liberal theories of race relations. Indeed he raises this rejection to the level of an ethical obligation, both for them and for their fellow black Americans.

PATTERSON'S ARTICLE is both provocative and opaque; it appears to be a sequel to his earlier *Public Interest* piece, "On the Fate of Blacks in the Americas." * In this earlier essay, Patterson clearly and convincingly traces the differences in the condition of black communities in the Western hemisphere to sharply divergent patterns of slavery. Despite these differences, he plausibly argues, the contemporary economic dislocation of blacks generates a basis for a cross-national unification. Yet the black American leadership—rather than develop a political strategy that aims to transcend the life-style in black ghettos—has chosen to idealize that life-style by 'proletarianizing' itself.

These themes reemerge in Patterson's novel of West Indian slave culture, *Die the Long Day*. Here we witness the dynamics of the master-slave relationship in all of its complexity. The moral dilemma of the slave turns on the issue of rebellion and self-dignity. Can the slave think of himself as heroic for enduring a brutalizing experience—or is this merely a rationalization for the mere survival of a submissive self? Is overt rebellion the necessary evidence for dignity—or is it a futile act of desperation?

In all his writings Patterson treats an issue that is crucial for the contemporary black American: the interdependence of personal life and political action. He assesses forcefully the difficult task of overcoming internalized negative self-images. Patterson is also on target in isolating the importance of a personal self-image for effective political action. His discussion of the need for the kind of responsible black political and intellectual leadership that arises from a positive self-valuation is indeed crucial in an environment plagued by demoralization, passivity, and retreat into individual violence. In reaction to arguments that falsely blame the black "victim," many black activists and intellectuals point to white "conspired" conditions and thereby rationalize and try to

excuse away demoralization and passivity. It is certainly important, in these years of political resignation, for a black intellectual like Patterson to prod his brothers and sisters to assert and hold themselves responsible for their own liberation.

Yet, it remains unclear why an ethic of self-responsibility must conflict with an acceptance of the empirical findings of sound research. At the root of Patterson's argument is a mistaken notion. "Since one's failure," says Patterson in a paraphrase of an argument he rejects, "is entirely the consequence of another group, or of a set of circumstances created by another group, then it follows that only that group can change one's conditions." But surely, to assert that X affects Y is different from arguing that *only* X affects Y. Even if black "failure" results *entirely* from circumstances created by whites, is it only up to the whites to stop the ball they started rolling?

Patterson also uses such concepts as determinism and self-autonomy as if they were personal reactions to external events that are exclusive of one another. But, as Patterson acknowledges elsewhere, the internalization of the values of a dominant group by a subordinate group is a complicated process of change and tension. There are conditions under which a black person who is primarily oriented toward the black culture sees white values as a peripheral constraint—and there are different conditions under which white values serve the black person as the sole basis for self-definition. Can the acceptance of responsibility for their own actions be achieved—for both kinds of blacks—through a "leap of will"?

How, exactly, can such a "leap of will" occur? To what degree can it be deliberate? Can it be an impulsive reaction? When a black person arrives at a breaking point—because of the actions of others—and reacts rebelliously, has this autonomous action been "willed"?

The realization of autonomy and self-will does not occur in a vacuum. Instead, the process of accepting responsibility for our actions should be treated as an individual posture toward the world that serves, in turn, as a social context (as in *Die The Long Day*).

From this standpoint, blacks themselves can best assess to what degree the possibility of self-realization is blocked by self-distortion and

* Reviewed in this column, by David Bensman, in our Summer 1972 issue.

to what degree by social barriers. But, first, there must be the necessary realistic understanding of society at large, if black Americans are to focus their political activity. A black person in Mississippi could have decided in 1960 that he was going to vote for John Kennedy—but if the registrar of voters refused to register him, he would most likely have been prevented from voting. The argument that this individual must accept “sole responsibility” for that outcome because he or she let it happen is indeed baffling: either this is a peculiarly confusing way of saying that one must accept but not acquiesce in one’s experience—or else it is completely wrong-headed.

Part of Patterson’s problem stems, perhaps, from his use of such terms as “moral,” “self-autonomy,” and “determinism” when treating such issues as the impact of social science research on the black mind. In his attempt to echo existential literature, the terms become like bats, slipping out of one’s grasp. Does the negative self-image of the blacks arise only out of a “moral” dilemma or does it also point to a deep and devastating “psychological” conflict? Is discussing the successful black American in terms of existential conflict a psychological explanation and, therefore, psychological “determinism”? And is it “self-autonomy” or solipsism to take responsibility for the reality of slavery, even in a metaphorical sense?

Beneath this inappropriate existential language, there seems to operate a new twist on the culture-of-poverty thesis. Banfield has said that the poor continue to be poor because they are unable to defer gratification. Patterson is now saying, blacks can explain *and* change failure by owning up to their responsibility for its existence.

What then, for Patterson, requires change? Surely not society—if all black failure is a result of black consciousness. In turn, if the successful black is the one who exemplifies existential rebellion and defies determinism, is the prescription for success of *all* blacks *only* the rejection of determinism?

How can Patterson envisage or even deem necessary a revolutionary transformation of the social order? Only by violating his own dogma—only by acknowledging this vital *link* between the personal and the political: the *interdependence* of consciousness and society

RONNIE STEINBERG RATNER □

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ECONOMICS AND THE PUBLIC PURPOSE, by John Kenneth Galbraith.
Boston: Houghton Mifflin. xiii + 334 pp. \$10.

I hope I will be forgiven if I begin a discussion of John Kenneth Galbraith's latest and most important book with a small lecture. The subject we call economics arose, during the 18th and early 19th centuries, as a branch of moral philosophy. By "moral" philosophy its practitioners emphasized the demarcation between their field of scrutiny, and that of "natural" philosophy, the province of astronomers, chemists, and the like. Inside the realm of moral philosophy took place those activities whose distinguishing characteristic was that they expressed contests of will; on the far side, the stars wheeled or the elements combined in cosmic indifference.

Within the field of moral philosophy, the area that came to be called political economy concentrated on one aspect of this social clash of wills—that involving the production and distribution of society's wealth. As political economists, the worldly philosophers recognized two aspects to their discipline. The first was a "technical" question—to understand how such an apparent melee could produce an orderly solution to the problem of social provisioning. The second question was political. It was to study the outcome of the contest from the point of view of the allocation of output among the contending classes of society.

In our own day only the first of these two perspectives remains: political economy has become economics. The social determination of behavior that so deeply interested Adam Smith has been lost to view in the abstractions of supply and demand; the clash of interests so dramatically depicted by Ricardo has dis-

appeared into the anonymous catch-all of "growth"; the struggle over the division of the product that lay at the center of Marx's analysis has been relegated to the analysis of the marginal productivities of the factors of production. Nothing could better describe the depoliticization of economics than that the very word "class" has been virtually expunged from the economic vocabulary, consigned to the keeping of those "soft" sister-sciences, political science and sociology.

So much for the lecture. I have used it to set the stage for a consideration of Galbraith as a writer in the tradition of political economy, one of the very few such writers in the profession today, excepting a group of radical economists to whose views we will return. Few would deny, I think—including least of all Galbraith himself—that the distinguishing characteristic of his economics has been its political focus, in particular its fascination with the subject of power. In one form or another, power has been the unifying theme through all of Galbraith's work.

From one book to the next, Galbraith's conception of power has become progressively refined and integrated into the economic framework. It is difficult to believe today that in *American Capitalism*, published in 1952, power—while already identified as the crucial problem within capitalist economy—was on the whole treated kindly, and regarded as essentially self-annulling through the "countervailing" competition among power-holders. In *The Affluent Society*, which appeared six years later, the countervailing concept had disap-

peared, but power remained. Now attention was focused on the unequal contest of private versus public power, exemplified in the overcultivation of the sphere in which corporate power was allowed its head and the undernourishment of that in which public power was confined.

The New Industrial State (1967) pressed this conception of power further. The themes of massive economic strength, already stressed in *American Capitalism*, and of the manipulation of the private sector, which figured large in *The Affluent Society*, were combined to portray capitalism as a system in which the organizing principle was that of planning, disguised by rhetoric and ideology to appear as "competition." The planning was organized by and for its vast corporate entities—the central repositories of power within the system—and carried out by the operations of the "technostructure," a word that emphasized the bureaucratic, rather than entrepreneurial, attribute of corporate management.

GALBRAITH'S LATEST BOOK, *Economics and the Public Purpose*, does not significantly alter this conception of capitalism as a system of disguised private planning. It fleshes out the earlier portrait by emphasizing the problems inherent in the coexistence of a traditional, truly powerless, competitive market sector and the central corporate structure of capitalism, although even that idea had already appeared in *American Capitalism*. Rather, that which marks off Galbraith's new book is not the diagnosis of, but the suggested response to power. The core of the book, in short, is a bold program designed to cope with the power structure of capitalism.

The earlier Galbraith books were uniformly disappointing with respect to their policy recommendations. At the conclusion of each, one had the feeling that Galbraith had undertaken an intellectual journey of some daring, but had always stopped short of the destination to which his exploration pointed. In *American Capitalism*, policy proposals were little more than a restatement of well-established Keynesian principles, since the countervailing power of capitalism needed little remedy. In *The Affluent Society*, the condition of social imbalance was to be redressed with minor correctives—increased public revenues to be obtained by a sales tax and a more generous system of unem-

ployment benefits. *The New Industrial State* was still more disappointing. Despite the depiction of capitalism as a kind of vast corporate cartel directing to its own benefit the purchasing power of the private sector and using for its own preservation the controlling hand of government, little was offered as a major remedy, save a call to arms of the intelligentsia who would in some fashion alter the public consciousness.

With *Economics and the Public Purpose*, all that has changed. Whether impelled by the growing clarity of his own convictions, or freed from the necessity of tactful caution by his withdrawal from public office, Galbraith has formulated a program that is finally adequate to his own diagnosis. At the risk of considerable oversimplification, let me summarize it as follows:

(1) *The power centers of capitalism are to be controlled by socialization.* I say "socialization" rather than socialism, (although Galbraith does not flinch from that word) because his proposals cover a wide range of public intervention. The major arms producers are to be nationalized. More important, large corporations are to be converted into semipublic organizations by the forced exchange of their shareholders' securities for government bonds. Permanent wage and price controls would constrain the corporation's freedom of maneuver and manipulation. Collective bargaining would include the range of income differentials from janitor to president.

(2) *Powerless areas of the economy would be given a new organizational strength.* The archaic market sector would be brought toward a parity of power with the corporate center. Small businessmen would be permitted to combine to stabilize prices and output. Where the market sector failed to produce socially adequate performance, as in health, housing, and the performing arts, socialization would be freely used. High minimum wages and generous income support would prevent the Hobbesian competition that has typically demoralized the market sector. Meanwhile the economic and political power of the most important and most exploited group in the society—women—would be enhanced by measures to establish their economic equality, including day-care centers for would-be mothers, and quotas to force the hir-

ing of proportionate numbers of female executives in larger firms.

(3) *Central government power is to be strengthened.* The aforementioned wage and price controls would become part of the national economic armamentarium, along with a strong fiscal policy. More important—indeed, perhaps most important—the decision-making of the corporate planning establishment would be made subject to a higher level of public decision-making: “[The state] will impose overall planning on the planning system” (p. 318).

THIS RÉSUMÉ grossly understates the detail, argument, and sophistication of Galbraith’s program, but it should indicate the scope and audacity of the general design. This is a genuine program for social democracy or democratic socialism, and here is surely the place to salute Galbraith for having offered the most imaginative, courageous, and far-reaching blueprint for economic policy that has been produced since World War II.

Inevitably, I have doubts about some parts of the program. I fear that nationalizing the armament makers will make them less, not more, subject to public control by bringing them under the protective arm of the Pentagon as a permanent part of the bureaucracy. I am wary lest a program of high minimum wages generate unnecessary unemployment. I fear that the day-care centers so enthusiastically advocated as a means for freeing women from the tyranny of child-care may end up at the level of performance of hospitals and homes for the aged. I wish there were more attention paid to improving the quality of those public goods disproportionately consumed by the poor, especially judicial, penal, and police services.

These are, however, cavils. They would supplement, or slightly change, the nature of the overall program, but they are offered only to strengthen, not to attack, that program. Much more serious, in my view, is another element in Galbraith’s book, an element that deprives his analysis of the cutting power it might have. This is the nature of Galbraith’s description of power itself. Power in Galbraith’s view consists in the ability of corporate entities to use household purchasing power and government supervision to assure their own continuance, prerogatives, and growth. Power is thus identified with

the capacity of institutions to further their own purposes, and the remedy for power becomes the blunting of that capability.

This is undoubtedly power of a sort (and a very important sort), but is it *political* power? Or more pointedly, is it the kind of political power with which political economy is properly concerned? In my view it is not. The power that interests Galbraith is the generalized power of bureaucracy. With minor alterations, his analysis could be applied with equal cogency to fascist systems or centrally planned economies like the Soviet Union. What lacks in this generalized discussion is an analysis of the underlying purpose for which the technostucture exerts its organizing capabilities under capitalism. *In particular, what lacks is a description of the general class interests that are served by the operation of the technostucture in a capitalist society.*

I am aware, of course, that the notion of class structure and class interests has fallen into considerable disrepute, and is espoused today mainly by that radical wing of economists to whom I earlier referred. Much of their work seems to me vitiated by a certain arid dogmatism, but my dismay is with the unimaginative application of their views, not with their underlying perspective itself. If I may revert to my opening lecture, I believe the Classical Economists and Marx were correct in viewing the economic system as a means for systematically producing and reproducing different class fortunes, and this insight, I think, must be added to that of an appreciation of sheer institutional manipulative capability, if one is to move from economics to political economy.

The problem that must be raised by political economy is a simple but fundamental one: how does it happen that so many of the prevailing beliefs and operative institutions in capitalist society are compatible with, or supportive of, the claims of massed property? That these claims are as intellectually fictitious as those of monarchy is not a difficult proposition to defend. What must be explained is why the pretensions of monarchy have fallen, while those of property still reign. Capitalism as a system cannot be adequately explained—much less reformed—as long as it is viewed as nothing more than a structure of interlocked bureaucracies that display the self-preservative and self-ag-

grandizing drives of any such structure. Capitalism must be seen as a social system permeated from top to bottom with a belief in the divine rights of property, and therefore as a system whose operation systematically produces and reproduces rewards and privileges for those whose place in society is linked with property.

Such an initial perspective need not lead one to dogmatic conclusions, although the temptations are very great. One may include within the institutions that support property (or at least do not mortally threaten it) parliamentary systems or even a relatively unfettered intellectual freedom. One may conclude that the alternatives to a capitalist hegemony, in today's world, are likely to be a kind of military socialism, or a middle-class authoritarianism, or worse. Thus a "class" view of capitalism does not necessarily determine one's political orientation. But it is nonetheless indispensable for one's political-economic understanding.

I think it is the absence of such a class view that accounts for the critical weakness in Galbraith's analysis. This is his failure to match a bold program for reform with an equally bold appraisal for the chances of achieving reform. To what constituency does Galbraith look for the realization of his blueprint for change? It is a polyglot group—women-in-general, the market-manipulated middle class, the liberated intellectuals. Surely the lesson of the past decades is that no such strong constituency exists. The social, economic, and political view of the existing structure is without serious rival, just as the views of various priesthoods in religious states have often been unchallenged for long periods of time.

This may change. A major depression—unlikely but not impossible—a further deterioration of national morale and capability, a serious environmental challenge might loosen the political hegemony of the capitalist view sufficiently to enable a genuine political change to take place. As I have indicated, it is by no means certain that such a change would be agreeable, but that is another question. Meanwhile the task of a practitioner of political economy must be an illumination of for whom, as well as how, the socioeconomic system works. Ancillary to his analysis will be a realistic appraisal of the conditions for the assumption of power by a different class. This may lead to discouraging or depressing prognostications, but it would avoid

the error of misleading the public as to the means by which, or the ease with which, a program of democratic socialism might be gained.

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Henri Rabasseire

On Post-Human Society

THE COMING OF POST-INDUSTRIAL SOCIETY: A VENTURE IN FORECASTING, by Daniel Bell. New York: Basic Books. 507 pp. \$12.50.

It is the thesis of this book that the R&D revolution brings forth a new type of society, which can no longer be called capitalistic in any previously accepted sense. Its decision-makers are not the wealthy owners of the means of production but those whose training and function enables them to use, plan, and augment society's equipment. The motive of their actions is not profit but *Zweckrationalität*—the abstract drive of all scientific-technological potentialities to realize themselves. A society built on these premises may include economic features of corporate or state capitalism, of the welfare state, or of socialism; but if I understand the author's meaning: the social-economic characteristics no longer are essential to describe this society's mode of operation. Nevertheless, to call it "post-industrial" is awkward and seems to be justified only by the nonintrinsic reason that Kenneth Galbraith already has taken title to all other possible terms. Its main sociological features are the suspension of the operational code characteristic of a free-enterprise system and, as Bell shows very convincingly, profound changes in the nature and functions of the traditional classes.

In reviewing this remarkable book, I am threefold fortunate. In his article in the Spring 1973 *DISSENT*, Robert Heilbroner said just

about all there is to say on the question whether capitalism has been superseded by postcapitalism. Then, in the Summer 1973 issue, Shlomo Avineri attacked the illusion of a scientific elite, in the masterly disguise of a debate between Marx and Saint-Simon. Since I shall have to voice some criticism, I now wish to point to my enthusiastic review of one of Bell's earlier books (*Work and Its Discontents*), and to the inclusion of a superb chapter from his present work in *DISSENT's* special issue on blue-collar workers.¹ It is always a pleasure to read Bell's clear prose, to share his vast erudition, and to benefit from his industrious research. Besides, I share with him an attitude to Marx that might be described as "critical awe"—i.e., the conviction that most of the facts on which *Das Kapital* was based are now dated, that its predictions have either not come true or have to be substantially modified, and that its specific theories are no longer very helpful, but—and this is a big but—that Marx was right in treating ideologies as the expression of class interests.

In an earlier book, Bell coined the controversial term "The End of Ideology," for which he has been attacked quite unfairly, precisely by some who should have acclaimed it. Following Karl Mannheim, Bell has countered "ideology," i.e., false consciousness, with a call for "utopia," i.e., a precise working plan for a rational society. Like Mannheim, too, Bell assumes that such a society will be run by an intellectual elite rather than by politicians representing various interest groups, natural divisions, or passionate concerns. Bell is rather impatient with factional and functional claimants who quarrel over distributive shares of the GNP, and he calls for a "polis of the future," where the citizens' sole disagreement will be over the concerns of communal welfare.

From Plato to Saint-Simon, such visions have always been intimately connected with the educational utopia, where the rulers shall not be elected but selected, and where training and examinations will determine a service class or "meritocracy."

Bell, of course, is much too sophisticated a sociologist to ignore the objection that "the end of ideology" itself may be an ideology: the jus-

tification for the claim of a new ruling class that aspires to be the legitimate heir of the bourgeoisie. In this sense, George Lichtheim called the new society "postbourgeois," Ralf Dahrendorf the "service society," and Zbigniew Brzezinski the "technicentric society."

The idea itself is not new. Saint-Simon already thought that the future belonged to scientists and technicians who would solve the problems of society administratively. Marx criticized this utopia as an ideology of industrial capitalism and, in this context, devoted considerable thought to the problem of bureaucracy. Today we know, much more clearly than Marx knew, that every despotism in recent history has tried to justify itself by the mission to modernize, to industrialize, to rationalize, and to ensure scientific efficiency. In contrast to Saint-Simon, Marx pointed out that the pretext of performing a service for the whole of society merely disguises the usurpation of powers by a special class. (And how right he was: prominent disciples of Saint-Simon became the great financiers of the Second Empire!)

Marx, as we know, thought that the future of society—i.e., the interest of its human aspect—could only be pursued by a propertyless class. Now Bell has no difficulty in showing that modern workers have much more to lose than their chains, and that their consciousness is far from being "proletarian" in the revolutionary sense of a class whose aim is the end of all classes. Moreover, as we know too, the industrial workers of the manufacturing trades are losing ground to the workers in the so-called service industries; industrial workers no longer constitute a majority in the most advanced countries, and their percentage of the total work force is decreasing. But what does that prove? Obviously, if the proletarians lose their historical mission by default, it still does not follow that another class must take over that mission. Yet Bell assigns it to the scientists, and his book gives the appearance, by its breadth and historical perspective, that he wants to do for this new elite what *Das Kapital* tried but failed to do for the proletariat.

SO FAR, all that has been established is a statistical fact from which the brilliant chapter of Bell's book that appeared in *DISSENT's* blue-collar issue drew some pertinent political con-

¹ Daniel Bell, "Labor in the Post-Industrial Society," *DISSENT*, Winter 1972.

clusions. Bell, however, uses this same information to carry a metahistorical burden: the claim that our society is "post-industrial." But do his figures really prove that? True, the service industries have increased their share in the GNP, but, simultaneously, they have been industrialized in both senses: their internal operation has taken on the form of large mechanical enterprises—which is true for commercial laundries as well as for banks and railroads—and relations with customers have become depersonalized (as anybody who has recently seen his doctor can testify). They have taken on the purposeful rationality that is so characteristic of industrial capitalism. And only one thing has changed since the days of Marx: white-smock workers have been demoted to the status of employees, admittedly a modification of Marx's prediction. Not only have more jobs been subjected to the rationale of industrial efficiency; Bell himself shows cogently that capitalist industry now is eliminating the remnants of irrationality in its social system. Where industrial adventurers once built empires by hunch and lost them, where inventions had to wait for someone to take a fancy to the idea of exploiting them, where land was developed haphazardly—there now is purposeful planning of the market, rational expansion of the enterprise, inventions' tailoring "to order."

Lenin would have called this "the highest stage of industrialism," but when Bell calls it "post-industrialism" he seems to have an idea, not unsimilar to Lenin's, that the "highest" goes over the top (dialectically, if you will excuse the term) into a more rational society. The ideology for this new technological society was provided simultaneously by the Austrian Marxist Rudolf Hilferding, the protofascist Oswald Spengler, and by the industrialist-statesman of the Weimar Republic, Walter Rathenau.

Bell states the thesis (on p. 373):

- (1) economic developments no longer are an independent variable and have been subjected to the "political order";
- (2) social functions have become severed from property;
- (3) as a consequence, power is transferred from those who used to run capitalist enterprises—the free-enterprise bourgeoisie—to the manipulators of various control systems;

(4) these members of the new power elite are defined as "scientists, mathematicians, economists, the engineers of the new intellectual technology";

(5) the government will "base [its decisions] on sponsorship of research and development, of cost-efficiency and cost-benefit analysis." For that they have a whole arsenal of "game theory, systems analysis, information theory."

The bureaucratic organizations of industry and government, even education, have come under the scientific control of a new knowledge industry, which is the subject of a full chapter. If I understand this chapter correctly, Bell writes that it is possible to chart technological and scientific progress as an exponential curve,² which is an independent variable and therefore determines the course of social developments much as the infrastructure in vulgar-Marxism determines the "superstructure."

This brings me back to the Marxian view on ideologies. It is difficult to imagine a society that is governed by more irrational forces than ours—precisely because each of the national, industrial, and cultural empires is driven by its own calculus to the fullest realization of its potentialities without regard for the development and well-being of the whole. The assertion that *Zweckrationalität* (Max Weber's term for purposeful rationality) of the whole is achieved if each part follows its own *Zweckrationalität* does not differ from Adam Smith's assertion that Providence had somehow whispered into each producer's ear what to manufacture in order to realize the preestablished harmony of the market.

The advocates of technocratic rule have added to this ideology the assertion that the total society should be ruled scientifically and rationally by an elite agency that knows (or can determine scientifically) what is in the public interest. Hegel called the Prussian civil service the "universal estate." Now this elite is often called a "meritocracy"—as if there were any correlation between good marks in graduate administration courses and wisdom, or be-

² Since growth cannot go through the roof and resources exhaust their possibilities of exploitation, Bell postulates for practical purposes a flattened ~ as the typical curve. This observation seems to be his main justification of the term "post-industrial." But he does not discuss the implications of stagnation.

tween either and the achievement of positions of power. Now Bell seems to assume we are ruled by mathematicians, scientists, and other members of the "intellectual technology." The country he is talking about certainly—in the year of Watergate—is not the United States. He may have written this chapter of his book at the time when McNamara's whiz kids made copy; but American TV audiences have recently been treated to quite a different view of who rules us, and the Pentagon Papers have revealed that the so-called technocrats made the feasibility studies but, and let's be thankful for small favors, they did not make the policy decisions.

This description of the "intellectual technology" does not even fit the famous French *inspectorate* or the Soviet *natchelstvo*. Pompidou was a professor of classics and a banker, and Brezhnev certainly did not owe his rise to power to his early engineering-school training. De Gaulle did try to replace politicians with civil servants in his *cabinet*, but he had to abandon the project. Nevertheless, it is true that in the most advanced countries, "scientific technology" has become the main ideology of the industrial-capitalist system, and it is somewhat surprising that Bell, for all his erudition, does not even mention Jürgen Habermas's important studies on precisely the subject of his book.³ While Habermas treats scientific rationality as a myth, Bell speaks as though the ability to solve problems bears with it the knowledge of which problems need solving.

From this point of view, the claim that "scientists" will sagaciously and judiciously ascertain the best interests of society is an illusion—if it is not a deceit. It conceals the brutal fact that managers *employ* scientists and *order* the problems they wish to be created or solved. Systems will be free to follow the rationale of their particular dynamics, and managers will identify their own interests with those of a reified rationality. The governing scientists, armed with the awesome powers of modern technology, must answer the question that has bugged all utopians since Plato: who is going to guard the guardians, or, as Marx put it, who is going

to educate the educators? Bell, like Marx, hails the coming of a new economic system as progress, but where Marx also attacked the class that introduced industrial capitalism, Bell accepts the new class rule almost uncritically, naively, even enthusiastically. Bureaucracy indeed has the great merit of achieving what it promises—whereas the plebiscitarian and the representative devices, which claim to bring decision-making under public scrutiny, in fact no longer contribute to political decision-making or may even be a hindrance to rationality. Bell fears above all the "politics of passion," a quality of which his scientists are so innocent that one wonders whether he has checked with Skinner.

Now I know that only oriental despots hold the messenger personally responsible for the bad news, and I hope that Bell does not desire the realization of his frightening "schema" for the future American society. I also appreciate that this is only an "ideal type"; but I cannot assume that Bell borrowed his terms inadvertently from the *ancien régime*. On top of the pyramid, he sees "four estates"—the scientific, the technical, the administrative, and the cultural elites. Below them, there will be people with progressively decreasing years of training: the semiprofessionals, and the clerical, skilled, and semiskilled workers. They will be employed in five "situses" (another medieval term suggesting the freezing of social relations): in the economy, in government, the universities, social services, and the military. Finally, they will be controlled by a "political order," with a "directorship" on top and "mobilized groups" at the bottom.

Recently, a bevy of Spenglerian terms—most of them borrowed from the imagery of total war—has invaded the sociologists' "estate": total mobilization, which was the ideology of General Ludendorff and of Marinetti in World War I. At the time, this imagery was popularized by Oswald Spengler and Ernst Jünger. (The latter improved greatly on the scheme by proposing that workers be converted into a "third sex." I would reverse this proposal and suggest that the scientific elite be deprived of the joys of sex so as to make them more dispassionate, and to provide for their procreation by artificial insemination.) Unlike these

³ Two of Habermas's books, *Toward a Rational Society* and *Knowledge and Human Interest*, are now available in English (both, Boston: Beacon, 1971).

prophets of totalitarianism, Bell is not interested in the paraphernalia of the national state, and (*qua* intellectual as distinct from scientist, or as a liberal and humanist) he would be most unhappy in the society he predicts; it also can be predicted with confidence that, should his projections come true, his fate would not be a happy one.

To do justice to Bell, he is aware of all this. He admits that a substantial group of intellectuals—those of C. P. Snow's humanist culture, those of Roszak's counter culture, and those of Charles Reich's "third consciousness"—may drop out of the "schema" and that to keep them quiet may be more than a problem for the police or, following Huxley's more humane advice, the "providers of drugs." The "mobilization groups" must be mobilized for something, and there is nothing to take the place of an ideology. It may be true that the post-industrial society is based on intensive communication with those groups that are integrated and have a function or accept that society. But it is equally true that such a society does not communicate with its disaffected subjects and, therefore, politics will return, not

only through the back door of debates within the technological elite but also through the front door of riots and anomie.

Bell admits, only to forget it later, that technical problems are political problems. He sees clearly that the technological establishment may have nothing to communicate to a number of its subjects; but he does not consider the possibility that these people may seek to communicate something to the leadership. Bell promises to write a second volume, in which he will discuss the human aspect of the postindustrial society. I hope that his postbourgeois, postindustrial society does not turn out to be post-human, too. □

Terry M. Perlin

Quixotic Radical

REVOLUTIONARY JUSTICE: THE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL THEORY OF P.-J. PROUDHON, by Robert L. Hoffman. Urbana: University of Illinois Press. 429 pp. \$15.

Pierre-Joseph Proudhon's intellectual bones have been claimed by such varied inheritors—anarchists and fascists, syndicalists and individualists, progressives and reactionaries—that it is nearly impossible to assess his influence. It is no less difficult to clarify and sort out what he really meant. Alternately illuminating and obfuscating, Proudhon's complex thought has at last been analyzed with precision, sympathy, and deep seriousness in Robert Hoffman's *Revolutionary Justice*, a book not likely to be topped as a history of Proudhon's ideas.

Proudhon is presented as a sometimes hasty, often dramatic journalist and as an aspiring yet incompetent philosopher. Proudhon, the seeker of liberty, was dangerously infatuated with the political potential of Louis Napoleon Bonaparte. He simultaneously loved the masses

G. D. H. COLE

An Intellectual Biography

L. P. CARPENTER

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and hated the people. An advocate of perpetual peace, his major work on the subject (*War and Peace*, which may have been Tolstoy's inspiration) is a near panygeric to the ennobling qualities of war. Proudhon struggled for freedom in the abstract yet was an adamant opponent of the liberation of women. For all his confusion, he nonetheless had a clear notion of his own dislocation. "I am more convinced than ever," he wrote in the 1840s, "that there is no place for me in this world, and I regard myself as in a state of perpetual insurrection against the order of things."

Living amid great events—the revolutions of 1848, the rise of the Second Empire, the birth of the European revolutionary movement—he was regarded in his day as incomparably more significant than Karl Marx. Since then his reputation has steadily declined. Marx's initial judgment, made in 1847, has come to seem almost invincible: Proudhon the novice in economics, the lightweight in philosophy, the danger to the socialist movement. Hoffman's book is not a defense, but a detailed account of a political philosophy destined to fail in the 19th century but perhaps more interesting today.

The overarching concept for Proudhon is the idea of justice. Achieving justice is a spiritual quest, encompassing, as Proudhon rhapsodizes, "the essence of humanity." This "central star which governs society" is a special, almost cosmic thing. Yet it has objective manifestations and Proudhon (with Hoffman's analytic aid) presents its outlines. Justice is the principle of right ordering, the fusion of moral good and social harmony. It is not a mere idea; it is the practice of a reasonable, nonauthoritarian, collectively responsible society. It is a great and beautiful thing, "immanent spirit" in action.

Overblown rhetoric does not blind Proudhon to genuine social problems. If justice is to be achieved, the dams that restrain it must be broken. Proudhon, Hoffman insists, is an anarchist. All unnatural forms of authority, all repressions of individual freedom and inhibitions of social harmony are to be resisted and destroyed. Penetrating the rhetoric of so-called democrats, criticizing other socialists who lack his own emotional sense of the needs of the working classes, Proudhon the occasional journalist became a powerful propagandist, the intel-

lectual center of the European anarchist movement, a title that only gradually shifted to Bakunin and Kropotkin.

Proudhon's anarchism is, as Bertrand Russell might have put it, "all spots and jumps." He despises government, of course, because it wages war, taxes the poor unfairly, subsidizes the rich; it manipulates majorities in order to repress minorities. But what really distresses Proudhon is the idea of authority and law which government symbolizes. All forms are equally culpable. As Hoffman puts it, "Between absolute monarchy and the most radical democracy there are only variations in the portion of citizens supposed to participate." But such variations are illusory and without meaning, for authority is always to be exercised by someone else. Freedom cannot be balanced with order, for in the process justice is affronted. Proudhon's conclusions form the basis of the anarchist antipolitical canon. Universal suffrage is useless (why elect one's persecutors?). Representative government means that men surrender their own powers of judgment. Legislation is arbitrary, an artificial effort to smother diversities in public opinion. Any support of government, Proudhon seems to say, is immoral.

If revolutionary purity is measured by the official condemnation it evokes, Proudhon spent the requisite time in prison. His credentials as an enemy of privilege are not in doubt. (Yet, for all his anarchist purity, Proudhon was elected to the National Assembly in May 1848.) The chaos of events often forced him to shift his opinions, but on one matter, that of family life and the position of women, he was unyielding. While he "did not regard his wife as either brood mare or kitchen drudge," Proudhon was a traditionalist: chastity was his theory and his practice. He certainly regarded women as innately inferior to men. And this opponent of all forms of state authority seems to have had no reservations about the exercise of power over his domestic dominion. Perhaps he thought such authority "natural" and honorable.

It is easy to mock Proudhon. Yet, as Hoffman notes, he left a legacy at once admirable and challenging. He was an unqualified opponent of violent insurrection. His fidelity to gradualism did not spring from a metaphysical pacifism, he simply felt that those who rush

headlong into a violent revolution will fail. The European socialists and their Leninist and Maoist followers who ignored Proudhon's warnings about revolutionary violence have done so at a considerable price.

IN HIS BATTLES with Marx, Proudhon has long seemed the obvious loser. Hoffman is not so sure. No doubt the revolutions of the 20th century were waged in the name of Marxism; it is also true that the fate of the anarchists—especially in the Russian Revolution—has been dismal. Hoffman does not presume to rank Proudhon with Marx as a creator or synthesizer of ideas, nor does he see Proudhon as the equal of Marx in organizational ability, polemical sharpness, and clarity of historical understanding.

Marx's system, Hoffman remarks, appealed to both intellectuals and the working class in ways that Proudhon's moral invocations never could. Marx sought the seizure of power; Proudhon wanted its liquidation. Marxism gave the appearance of empirical analysis and scientific certainty; Proudhon was "diffuse, unsystematic, confusing, and idealistic." The Marxist ideology was attractive to the potential rebel because it gave a coherent sense of mission as well as a program both demanding and possible. Proudhon's notion of "moral regeneration" is out of place in "a world where only power seems really to count."

Yet the Marx-Proudhon struggle is far from settled. It is not simply a matter of pragmatists versus utopians, winners versus losers. For the heirs of Marx, Hoffman notes, have surely failed their master. The Communist experiments have given us tyranny; the social democratic parties have basked in complacent self-satisfaction. With the conquest of power as "the all-consuming passion," the Marxists have not made a new world; they have only burdened the old world with new instruments of authority.

What Proudhon offers—and Hoffman is good in describing his many concrete plans for small-scale change—is an alternative to the illusions of capitalist freedom and the disillusionments of communist revolution. Discard the anachronisms of Proudhon's ideas, says Hoffman, and "the remainder retains its integral force and cogency." One wonders, however, just how much substance does remain. Proudhon was simply not a very practical

thinker. His notions about massive free credit led nowhere. His federative ideas—which revolve around contractual relationships between communities and their individual members—are untried. Their applicability to the modern industrial economy is suspect.

No, I fear that Proudhon's hopefulness about human progress and his convictions about the triumph of justice cannot now be sustained. As Hoffman says, "his vision of human history is a noble one." Yes, but it is not an accurate one. For Proudhon—moralist, seeker, and idealist—let his vision obscure his viewpoint. Like many anarchists he was literally a reactionary, resenting the depersonalizing forces of modernity: urbanization, capitalist industrialization, state centralization, and the consequent melting of individual difference. So he looked to an ancient ideal, Justice, with fidelity and hope, and his life and work were admirably quixotic. □

Estelle James

Simple Book, Complex Figure

THE FALL AND RISE OF JIMMY HOFFA, by Walter Sheridan. New York: Saturday Review Press. 554 pp. \$10.95.

As head of the Kennedy "get Hoffa" squad, Walter Sheridan was instrumental in putting Hoffa into prison. His book is a warning about the threat Hoffa, in Sheridan's view, still poses to society.

The first part of the book, largely a rehash of other writings, deals with the McClellan Committee investigation and allegations of Teamster corruption, emphasizing connections

between the union and the Mafia. The second part takes up Kennedy's crusade against Hoffa and its eventual culmination in two convictions—for jury-tampering and pension-fund fraud. These chapters are more interesting than the earlier ones especially when Sheridan writes about his own personal involvement. The third part describes Hoffa's efforts to get the convictions overturned, resulting, finally, in a conditional commutation by President Nixon. Hoffa now is out of jail, but prohibited from engaging in union activities until 1980.

Sheridan has accomplished a difficult task: he has made tedious reading of an innately fascinating subject. He follows a rigid chronological order amid a jumble of names and dates, often without giving the necessary topical interconnections. And he fails to bring much insight or perspective to his subject. In Sheridan's simplistic world, Hoffa is synonymous with evil. There are no shadings of complexity to the man or the issues. Sheridan ignores the basic fact that Hoffa was able to retain the loyalty of hundreds of thousands of rank-and-filers, despite the disclosures brought out by the McClellan Committee and the trials. Surely, it was not his alleged Mafia connection that made this possible. Sheridan examines at great length the ways in which Hoffa may have hurt the rank and file—through conflict-of-interest business deals, mismanagement of the Teamster pension fund, unsavory associates—but he has virtually nothing to say about Hoffa's performance as a bread-and-butter trade union official. My own study of Hoffa's leadership shows that he worked unusually hard at his job and was singularly effective in improving the wages and working conditions of Teamster members.

Nor does Sheridan address the issue of centralization of power, which went hand-in-hand

with Hoffa's trade union gains. Is such centralization good, bad, or indifferent? As an economist, I am tempted to do a benefit-cost analysis. On the credit side, centralization permits a union to take advantage of certain economies of scale—in negotiating, collecting information, etc. Industrywide bargaining may make employers more amenable to settling, since they know that all their competitors will be facing the same wage increase, eventually to be passed along to their customers in the form of higher prices. A uniform expiration date, furthermore, gives the union the power to strike selectively the weakest link in the chain. These arguments apply especially to the over-the-road truck driver, where the competition is mainly nationwide, rather than to cartage and warehousing, where the market is local. However, the latter groups can benefit in their negotiations from ties to the former, who can refuse to "interline" with recalcitrant local employers. Thus, from a strategic bargaining point of view, Hoffa's drive for centralization makes sense.

While many Teamsters benefited from Hoffa's leadership, others lost. The latter include those (e.g., on the West Coast) whose particular local situation made it possible for them to do better under conditions of pure local bargaining. These members constitute a clearly identifiable and vociferous anti-Hoffa group. Another, less identifiable group also lost out: the people who might have obtained Teamster jobs if Hoffa had not raised wages as much as he did. This wage-employment trade-off was especially significant in the South, where Hoffa unionized, in part, to preserve Teamster jobs up North. Thus the higher Southern wages were gained at the expense of expanded employment.

Finally, a third group lost out—those who cared deeply about local control and participation vs. centralization.

Centralization may give the union increased control over the employers, but it also gives the workers decreased control over their own union. A union leader, understandably, would prefer this situation on both counts. As for workers in the United States, it appears that most of them, too, value wages and other material gains over the opportunity to participate. Indeed, many do not bother to attend union meetings, to vote in elections, etc. The large

To Our Contributors

- When sending manuscripts, please make sure that you do not send your only copy.
- And please also be sure to enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

—THE EDITORS

majority of Teamsters may have been getting exactly what they wanted out of Hoffa's leadership, and that may help explain why, as Sheridan says, despite all the efforts of the get-Hoffa squad, "nothing has really changed."

WAS HOFFA, then, an innocent victim of a vendetta or a guilty participant in criminal activities? In reading Sheridan's book, one is struck by the charges and countercharges that were exchanged between the Hoffa camp and the Kennedy camp. Evidence was offered, then denied; witnesses testified, then recanted; "facts" presented by one side were flatly denied by the other. I suspect that the full truth will never be known and that many people, when reviewing the entire chronology, will simply end up believing what their prejudices dictated initially—including the suspicion that there is much truth and much distortion in the positions of both groups.

Sheridan is persuasive in his documentation of jury tampering in the Nashville trial. Still, Hoffa was directly connected with these tampering efforts only by the testimony of a minor Teamster official, Ed Partin, who was in jail awaiting trial for kidnapping and embezzling union funds at the time he agreed to provide testimony against Hoffa. Several charges were pending against Partin during this period but they were not pressed until much later, under a new Administration and over the resistance of Sheridan and his colleagues. In 1973, after a number of mistrials, Partin was convicted of using extortion and violence in an antitrust violation. Surely, the credibility of such a witness is open to question. On the other hand, similar things might be said of many of the people with whom Hoffa surrounded himself; how does one find a credible witness in this situation?

I have written elsewhere in detail about the gross mismanagement of the pension fund which indeed has cost Teamster members

millions of dollars in pension assets. Risky real estate loans were made at below-market interest rates in order to win influential friends. It was not surprising that many subsequently defaulted on their payments. Bad as this was, it wasn't precisely a case of fraud, since not only Hoffa but most of the other trustees, too, were aware of and took part in the scheme. Indeed, as Sheridan reports, the same practices continue today, even though Hoffa is no longer a trustee. Clearly, we have here a case of widespread imprudent management that cannot simply be attributed to the behavior of one unscrupulous individual. Personal nonpecuniary returns are a characteristic substitute for private monetary profits, in cases where the law prohibits the latter but permits the former, and stakes become particularly high with such huge accumulations of funds. Yet Sheridan offers no analysis of, or remedies for, the union procedures that enable this mismanagement.

AFTER WATERGATE, one is struck by certain broader implications. Especially significant are the grave civil liberties questions raised by Kennedy's pursuit of Hoffa: the charges of wholesale wiretapping and other invasions of privacy, the dangers inherent in using the Justice Department and the FBI as tools for attacking political enemies.

The issue of centralization, too, goes much deeper than a mere evaluation of Hoffa. This issue arises in the labor movement, in corporate agglomerations, and, most strongly, in the government. Such centralization may be justified by claims of practicality, but it can also, in time, undermine a democracy. A moralistic book that focuses on the alleged corruption of a small group of individuals rather than on the values and institutions from which these individuals emerged may have some short-run value, but does not lead us very far toward a valid solution or even much illumination of the problem. □

LETTERS

On Modern Economics

Editor:

There are good reasons to criticize modern economics, but, unfortunately, Mark Kelman and Robert Lekachman do not employ them in their articles in the Summer 1973 issue of *DISSENT*. [See Robert Lekachman, "The Conservative Drift in Modern Economics," and Mark Kelman, "The Social Costs of Inequality."] I would like to point out the fallacies and internal inconsistencies in their writing, and to suggest some of the ways in which modern economic science *can* be improved and made an instrument of progressive social change.

(1) Kelman's central point, that with an inelastic supply, the price of a good is determined solely by the richest consumers, only holds in very special cases. In his "shipwreck" example, he assumes a monopolistic market (there is only one doctor), and a supply of medical care that does not satisfy even the demand of the richest victims of the shipwreck. Suppose we increase the number of doctors to, say, five, but keep their supply inelastic at a total of 250 hours of medical care. Suppose further that the rich victims together only require 240 hours of medical care. This would mean that 10 hours are "available" to the poor victims. But these poor victims, according to Kelman's example, cannot afford to pay as much for their medical care, so that the doctor with the 10 hours to sell must provide those hours at the lower price. When, however, he announces the lower price, all the other doctors must lower theirs or lose their business to the doctor with the "extra" time. The price would then fall to the price the poor victims can afford and some nonprice mechanism would be required to ration the excess demand.

This example illustrates two fundamental points. First, in a market not cornered by a monopolist, price is determined by what the *marginal* consumer is willing to pay. Second, the real reason we observe a shortage of medical care has nothing to do with the elasticity of supply, but rather depends on the shortage of doctors and other suppliers of such care. In economic terms, it is a question of the *position* rather than the *shape* of the supply curve. By focusing on the shortage of doctors rather than the alleged inelasticity of supply, Kelman would have been able to explain all the effects he notes in order to "test" his "model," and he would not have had to rely on the rather difficult-to-prove argument about the supply of medical care being inelastic in the "real world." Furthermore, he would have been led to

examine the important question of why the supply of medical care is being held back—whether it is a question of the AMA blocking entry, or whether some other force is at work.

(2) Lekachman cannot seem to decide in his article whether economists are "too" careful to keep value judgments out of their work, or whether their work is full of such value judgments. On the one hand, his piece is replete with references to economists' "intellectual values" and "scientific values" (which he identifies with an "attachment for market models"); on the other hand, he refers sarcastically to economists' "noble" reluctance to judge the "social merits" of the items that enter the national income accounts. This would be a puzzling picture indeed, if it were true. How can economic theory be value-free and yet include rigidly set "scientific values" such as promotion of free trade? If this were the case, we would observe anyone promoting selective economic controls and tariffs (Adam Smith was among them) being accused as "unscientific." This, however, is not the case: the journals contain quite a few articles on subjects Lekachman claims are "verboten": articles on the quality of goods as a concern of those who construct price indexes, articles on the valuation of nonmarket goods, articles on collusion, corporate growth, and monopolistic competition (Lekachman claims the existence of giant corporations to be in "defiance" of economic theory), on the welfare costs of inflation and unemployment, on the economics of socialism, etc. In short, Lekachman is at once unfair to economics by claiming it to be more narrow than it really is, and unfair to his own objective of providing an intellectually serious critique of the state of economic science.

(3) Just as Kelman misplaces his emphasis by stressing a bogus assertion about the elasticity of supply of vital commodities, Lekachman puts too much weight on the economists' refusal to make interpersonal comparisons of utility. For if the latter were the main "fault" of economic theory, we would have no reason to hope for the situation to ever get any better. The fortunate fact is that one does not need to make such interpersonal comparisons to analyze objective economic problems and provide direction for progressive changes of our economy.

Suppose, for example, that one wanted to study the possibility of having firms run by their workers. A central problem one would want to investigate is the efficiency of such firms, relative to their capitalistic counterparts. Jaroslav Vanek of Cornell University has studied this question and has concluded, on the theoretical side, that such firms would be at least as efficient, and, on the empirical side, that Yugoslav economic growth has been over the last 20 years about 8 percent per capita per annum, in *real* terms, which is, he writes, some four times that of the United States. If the implications of his work are correct, switching to labor management would not only make the working class and the poor better off, but would pro-

vide enough growth in per capita real income to fully compensate the capitalist class for its lost property!

The point of the above example is not to lend uncritical support to Vanek's thesis, but rather to show what a "cold" preoccupation with efficiency can do. The example brings out the fact that economic theory can be used to promote radical as well as conservative causes. In fact, as one observes the development of economics over the last 30 years, one can trace a drift, not toward conservatism, but toward a wider and more relevant application of economic principles. Cost-benefit analysis, to which Lekachman refers in his article, is a way of avoiding interpersonal utility comparisons and showing that in many cases the beneficiaries of a project gain enough to compensate the "victims" and have enough "extra" welfare to justify the project. Without statistical and other quantitative techniques, such analyses would not be possible. Furthermore, there is an increasing, rather than decreasing, interest in measuring the nonmarket benefits and costs of such projects. Such measurements are *not* considered to be value judgments, as Lekachman states.

(4) None of the above is meant to reflect a lack of awareness of the shortcomings of economic theory. The point is simply that those shortcomings are much more capable of remedy than Kelman's and Lekachman's cynical blanket criticisms suggest. The science of economics does not need to make value judgments any more than other, more advanced sciences do. It *does* need to expand its field of vision and to examine more carefully alternative socioeconomic institutions, the theory of collective decision-making, the types and consequences of economic conflict, and other areas. There is no fundamental reason why these subjects would be incapable of objective study, given an expanded set of analytical tools and an imaginative use of the existing tools. This, after all, is essentially what Marx attempted in his use of the classical economists' insights.

JOEL GUTTMAN
Chicago

ROBERT LEKACHMAN replies:

Mr. Guttman, presumably a loyal economist, admirably reinforces the central criticism of our specialty I made in my essay, that conventional practitioners smuggle value judgments wholesale into their ostensibly scientific inquiries. Is efficiency not a value? Is it scientific simply because the economist's version of it facilitates the computation of mathematical transformation functions? Efficiency mandates measurement of economic progress by the rate at which GNP grows. One could imagine, assuming other valuations, measuring progress by growth in work satisfaction, reduced inequities in the distribution of income

and wealth, greater success in reducing poverty, unemployment, racial and sexual discrimination, and so on. Formally there is nothing to choose among these value preferences. When economists concentrate on efficiency, they ought to know what they are doing: expressing an ethical judgment of what an economy ought to be doing.

I claim no novelty in this position. For the last four decades Gunnar Myrdal has been scolding his colleagues for their naivete in the pursuit of "scientific" analysis. If, as Bernard Nossiter recently charged, economics is a burnt-out case it is because the profession, with honorable exceptions such as Myrdal and Galbraith, ignores the way economic life is conducted. In the real world, behavior is better explained by politics, private economic power, and the unavoidable interpersonal and intergroup comparisons such processes involve, than by the "scientific" apparatus of modern price theory.

I do not apologize for the tone of my essay. One must either laugh or cry at the spectacle of so many bright people wasting so much time, thought, and ingenuity on the foolish pursuits of contemporary, mainstream economics.

MARK KELMAN replies:

Mr. Guttman makes two points about my piece, neither of which is the least bit cogent. First, he presumes a bizarre world, one where there are X number of millionaires and 100 percent— X people who are "poor" rather than a continuous distribution curve of income-holders, and he states that marginal price will be that available to the "poor" when an inelastic supply equals $X + 1$ goods. In fact, given the real, continuous distribution of income, marginal price would equal the spending of income-holders just poorer than the millionaire. There might indeed be some difference between monopoly and free competition in the supply of inelastic goods, but that difference is *only* in the ability of the supplier to practice price discrimination, that is, to charge the very rich more than the rich. Even this difference may not persist in the face of long-run excess demand, which educates each individual seller to the perpetual auction situation: in fact, competitive doctors are well-known to practice considerable price discrimination. But in *no case* will price fall below the *demand price* to the *cost* of supply, the *free market* ideal, when supply is inelastic and the highest bids of buyers exceed costs.

Second, he argues the familiar line that there is a shortage of doctors in America. This is simply a myth: we've got far more doctors per thousand people than England and far worse medical care. Those cities with an incredibly extensive number of doctors, such as New York, still completely fail to deliver medical care in the market and do a poor job with current nonmarket supple-

ments. My honest belief is that an expansion in the supply of doctors in this country would have an *adverse* effect on health since it would primarily serve to increase the amount of unnecessary, life-endangering surgery. Even if this is not the case, there's no evidence at all that it would lower the price of medicine. I'm no fan of the AMA's restrictive policies, but their conduct is simply not the telling factor.

Guttman also evidenced at the end of his letter the most sterile form of non-contextual "economism" in his statement that "a progressive economic" argument for workers' control might be that it is so efficient that it could "compensate the capitalist class for lost property"! Assuming (solely for the sake of argument) that Vanek's figures are both true and relevant to this society, Guttman still completely fails to take account of the fact that there would be no *reason* to compensate capitalists who obviously served no social function, and capitalists, knowing this full well, have thus by and large sabotaged even limited job-enrichment programs. This conduct is completely economically rational though it does not meet aggregate cost/benefit calculations. An "economist" who thinks in terms of aggregate efficiency and a conflict-free world rather than the *economic relations* among men is of no service to progressive change. □

Sex Discrimination in Universities

Editor:

I have always suspected that universities discriminate against women in hiring faculty. Then I read Frances Barasch's article ["HEW, the University, & Women," *DISSENT*, Summer 1973] which attempted to prove that this is indeed so. If Ms. Barasch's case is the best that can be made, then there is no reason to believe that universities discriminate. There is nothing wrong with preaching to the converted, but there is something wrong with a preacher who makes the converted lose their faith.

Ms. Barasch uses statistics in a way that is sometimes incomprehensible, and at other times comprehensible but wrong. She starts by saying that in the natural sciences, about 20 percent of all Ph.D.s are held by women. She compares this with the fact that about 20 percent of all faculty positions (in all subjects) are held by women. This comparison is supposed to be probative of discrimination. Surely, at first glance, it shows the opposite. As will be seen, it really shows nothing at all.

Ms. Barasch then finds discrimination in the

facts that there are many women with Ph.D.s and Ed.D.s in psychology (at least 3,000); that in 1972 only 5 percent were engaged in basic research (which I take to mean university work), and that therefore "the number of qualified women who are potentially available for academic work or upgrading is over 3,000, at a minimum, and the employment figures of women on the faculties of academic psychology departments do not reflect these figures."

Accepting these numbers as correct, what do they prove? They prove only that Ms. Barasch considers all Ph.D.s to be equal. But pretty plainly a Ph.D. from a great university, with brilliant course work and a fine thesis, is different from a Ph.D. from a tenth-rate university granted for mere rote work. A Ph.D. is like a union card, or a negative Wasserman test: not having it means trouble, but having it proves very little.

I believe that if one took into account, and compared, not Ph.D.s, but Ph.D.s of equal quality, one would still find bias against women, but that is only my hunch. What Ms. Barasch has done is to claim that she has statistical proof when all she has is ignorance of how to use statistics.

Now let us suppose that all Ph.D.s in psychology are equal, but that, as Ms. Barasch says, only 5 percent of women are engaged in basic research (which I again take to mean university work), and another 28 percent are in clinical psychology. Ms. Barasch does not state exactly what the figures are for male Ph.D.s in psychology, so let us also suppose that for men the numbers are reversed: 5 percent in clinical psychology and 28 percent in basic research. Even these numbers would prove nothing. They *might* show blatant discrimination against women, but only if one assumes that basic research in psychology is a more desirable field than clinical psychology, and that both men and women so view it. Why should we assume that? Indeed, I can think of reasons to doubt it. Clinical psychologists are, I am told, well paid, at least in private practice. One who charges \$20 per hour and works 2,000 hours a year would make \$40,000 per year. Surely, few people in basic research make that kind of money. Furthermore, clinical psychologists have, one hopes, the pleasure of helping people, and the reward of gratitude.

These are very important considerations in my own field (law): no university pays what a good lawyer can make in private practice. If a survey were to show that, say, Jews were rarely found on law faculties (this is in fact not so), although just as qualified as others, one would not know whether this was because of discrimination, or because Jews were fond of making money, or because Jews were fond of fighting cases for good causes, or of fighting cases for the fun of the game.

Yet there is still another explanation why women might *choose* clinical psychology instead of basic research. Universities are located in some odd places. If an unmarried woman were to choose clinical work in a great city, over research in Mis-

soula, Montana, on the grounds that there is more to life than work, that would not be the fault of the University of Montana. (I myself would rather live in Missoula than almost any place I know, but not everyone may share this taste.) Or suppose a married psychologist has a choice between research in Missoula, where her spouse cannot find work, and clinical work in New York City, where her spouse can find work. If she chooses New York City, that may indicate that her husband is inconsiderate, but the University of Montana seems blameless enough.

Ms. Barasch's figures about the employment of women psychologists are consistent with a pattern of blatant discrimination against women. They are also consistent with perfect fairness in hiring, or even with blatant discrimination against men. Ms. Barasch has proved nothing at all, a difficult, but not impressive feat. *If one knew more, if one knew that women prefer basic research to clinical psychology, and that they are willing to live in university towns, and that their qualifications were really equal to those of male psychologists, then there would be proof of discrimination.* I suspect that all of these "ifs" are in fact true, but suspicion is not enough. Even a strong case can be lost if its advocate is weak.

Now for another example. Ms. Barasch tells us that 37 percent of modern language teachers (in universities) are women, but only one-third worked full-time, "which means that two-thirds [of these women] . . . were *theoretically available for more desirable* full-time jobs" (emphasis added). Available? More desirable? Suppose these women *want* to work part-time. I do not say they do so want, but until we know, this is not evidence of discrimination. I might add that some people prefer part-time academic work: the most qualified woman professor I know insists on working part-time, so that she can spend more time with her children. Ms. Barasch, by the way, does not tell us how many male teachers of modern languages are working full-time.

Almost all of Ms. Barasch's other comparisons are meaningless for the same reasons. All one need do as one reads them is ask, "Can the failure to hire women be explained on the grounds that all Ph.D.s are not equal in quality?" and, "Can the lower academic status of women in any given field be explained by their lower age?" I would guess that the answer to both questions is, "No," but why should I have to guess?

Why am I so critical, picky, and captious about Ms. Barasch's style of argument? Because good causes deserve good advocates, and feminism is the best of causes. A lawyer arguing a case for a client who really deserves to win, on a point of law of great social importance, knows that she bears a great responsibility. To argue the case badly will do more harm than to drop the case completely. To fail to prove discrimination where discrimination in fact exists will be a disaster, because the judge and the public will think, "If this is the best case that can be made, all this talk

about bias must be nonsense." I think those who argue in the forum of public opinion face the same problem and bear the same responsibility.

D. C. SCHAFER
Boston

FRANCES BARASCH *replies*:

D. C. Schaffer's lengthy commentary on "HEW, the University, and Women" is precisely the kind of rhetorical backlash that has impeded the progress of equal rights since the beginning of the laws. Schaffer is one of those critics I referred to who will not "be stirred into [affirmative] action" until "individual cases of discrimination" are proved. One may as well refuse to patrol public parks, victims' complaints notwithstanding, until all the individual muggers have been caught and convicted.

Schaffer removes us from the forum of rational discussion and constructs a fantasy courtroom in which to posture and insinuate. In Schaffer's court of the absurd, women psychologists must prove they exist (even though they are the plaintiffs). If they exist, they must prove they are qualified. If they are qualified, they must prove they seek the kind of employment their complaints say they seek. But if they can prove this, they are fools for doing so, because clinicians (Schaffer has this on hearsay) are "well paid," and there is always "the pleasure of helping people," a reward presumably denied to basic researchers and academicians. Schaffer's absurdity arises from ignorance of recent legal developments, for which novices in law may be forgiven only if they refrain from premature publication and practice. Under the 1972 extensions of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, statistics showing patterns of discrimination can be used as *prima facie* evidence of discrimination in universities. If a pattern is indicated, the burden to justify practices falls on the university. (*Johnson v. University of Pittsburgh*, 5 FEP 1182. W.D. Penn., 1973; also *United States v. Oklahoma State University*, Civil No. 73-441-B. W.D. Okla., filed June 30, 1973.) In the context of DISSENT, this means it is Schaffer's kind who must justify the patterns of discrimination that I reported in brief.

Schaffer's pretense at reasoning would be laughed out of a real court. It is, after all, a syllogistic parlor game that any number can play: if Harvard had granted doctorates to women as well as men, and if Harvard then failed to hire reasonable numbers of their own women or other women, and if Harvard did hire Harvard men and other men, and if the Harvard faculty had taken a census (under HEW's guidance) and discovered that women were underrepresented even in proportions reflecting their own women doctorates, then one might conclude that there was discrimination against women at Harvard, and even the Harvard faculty might be moved to take affirmative action and seek to employ a proportion of women equal to the proportion of women granted Harvard

Ph.D.s in recent years. And all this did happen, and it was done.

Or, if a woman biochemist at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine charged discrimination in denial of tenure, and if the tenure records showed that in the past six years 70 men and only three women had been granted tenure, and that there were four untenured women for each untenured male, and that a male of comparable qualifications was granted tenure when the plaintiff was denied, and that other discrepancies had occurred in treatment of the sexes at the School of Medicine, then a court might grant a preliminary injunction forbidding the University from terminating her employment on the ground that a *prima facie* case for discrimination (based on statistics and other evidence) had been made. And all this did happen, and it was done. (*Johnson v. University of Pittsburgh*, *op. cit.*, reported by Bernice Sandler, American Association of Colleges, Project on the Status and Education of Women, August 1973.)

Finally, if D. C. Schaffer had read my entire article, as is by no means clear from the reply, he or she would have learned that thousands of women, for example in science, *choose* to sue the National Institute of Health for (full-time) jobs; this fact and Schaffer's nonspecific reference to one acquaintance who prefers part-time work may be juxtaposed and judged. If Schaffer had read all, he or she would have learned that I argue for fair practice under HEW guidelines so that women who have earned *exactly the same degrees* as men, even as their own husbands (the Porter-Gardner case), can have equal access to the jobs they seek. But this did not happen, and it was not done.

I repeat myself, of course, but that is the point of my article: "the arguments . . . bear repeating," and reason must hold a steady course in the face of common nonsense. For my stance, I may inherit the wind. But I have reason to believe otherwise. For a quarter of this century, I have taught my sons and students that there is virtue in the merit system. Soon, in spite of critics like Schaffer, I may begin to believe it myself.

(Since I wrote my article, in fall 1972, the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education has reported data similar to mine, describing identical patterns, and concluding—far more strongly than I—that women are "the largest unused supply of superior intelligence in the United States" [*Opportunities for Women in Higher Education*, October, 1973]. The American Council on Education has also completed a survey [*Teaching Faculty in Academe . . .*, by Alan E. Bayer] which shows that, in 1972–73, women were 20.0 percent of a faculty of 519,000 in 2,400 U.S. colleges and universities, only 0.9 percent more than in 1968–69. According to the ACE, there has been an increase in the percentage of women employed in universities and a decrease in two-year and four-year colleges. Bayer suggests this redistribution of affirmative action. Probably, underutilized academic women are being upgraded to positions requiring their full competency; there are local as

well as national indications that this is the case. At my own university college, since 1972, six women were promoted in rank, another was hired at senior rank, one was hired as director, three were elevated as deans, and new hires were made in unprecedented numbers. However, more able and willing women candidates applied than could be accepted. Most were neither very young nor inexperienced; they have been available for some time, and many still are.) □

Politics on the Left

Editor:

In its Spring 1973 issue, *DISSENT* carried what is introduced as "a chapter from Michael Harrington's forthcoming book . . . in which he describes his experiences over the last few decades." Interspersed between Harrington's descriptions of meeting with and campaigning for Robert Kennedy, his discussions with Mankiewicz, Moynihan, Schlesinger, Galbraith, *et al.*, his Magellan-like discovery of a "New Class," and lectures on socialist morality, is a polemic against his former associates in the democratic socialist movement who today provide much of the leadership for Social Democrats, U.S.A.

One of the targets of Harrington's advertisements for himself on the way out is the publication of the S.D., U.S.A., *New America*, which I edit. He criticizes it because it "hardly reacted to the epochal struggle of the miners for internal union democracy and reacted to the brutal slaying of the rebel leader, Jock Yablonski, primarily by worrying that this tragedy might be used by the foes of labor." He implies that this symbolizes the co-optation and "corrupting" by the AFL-CIO bureaucracy of those socialists he criticizes.

Harrington forgets to mention a few things. The article he refers to, which I wrote, opens by saying: "The murder of United Mine Workers opposition leader Joseph Yablonski and his wife and daughter is a heinous and a personal tragedy: it also happens to be part of an assault on the hopes for union democracy in the UMW." The article closes by noting that "labor can't continue to throw up its hands in helplessness over a situation such as that in the UMW," and it appeals to socialists and trade unionists to back the insurgents.

The *New America* article attempted to argue for such action as persuasively as possible against what was, in effect, a hands-off policy not only by the AFL-CIO but also the UAW during the UMW conflict out of a traditional labor position of noninterference in the affairs of another union. The *New America* article, in arguing, in this case, against the application of the traditional position—which has much historic justification—appealed to labor's self-interest and traditions for which no apologies whatsoever need to be made, and Har-

rington's charge of "self censorship" makes no sense. (Interestingly, the *New America* article on the UMW appeared on April 15, 1970, before it became a *cause célèbre* in the liberal community and it was not until long after, I believe, that Harrington, who had access to *New America*, other publications, and at the time a syndicated column, took up the cause in his writings.)

Harrington, in retrospect, seems to suggest that *New America* should have lectured organized labor on morality. The conception of morality I learned in the socialist movement had nothing to do with posturing.

In a socialist movement with high standards of political debate, a fundamentally democratic ideological tradition, and a leadership that included Max Shachtman and Bayard Rustin whose credentials were validated in real struggles against Stalinism and racism, attempting, as Harrington does, to kill one's opponents with kindness ("It was love of justice in America which led Bayard to ignore monstrous injustices in Indochina") and moral posturing ("there was a tendency in Shachtman's approach to reduce Marxism to a kind of pragmatism which put aside ideals . . . he had come perilously close to eliminating morality from the Socialist vision altogether") was considered the greasy-kid stuff that it is.

I'm sure fair-minded people will want to read

the other side of this debate on foreign policy, the conflict in the Democratic party, and other political issues raised in Harrington's article directly and not through an interpreter. I'd be glad to send those interested the statements on the issues in question of the S.D., U.S.A. majority which Harrington polemicalizes against.

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1182 Broadway, New York

MICHAEL HARRINGTON replies:

In his *New America* article on the Yablonski murders, Paul Feldman, of course, expressed his opposition to that horror. But what rightly outraged Joe Rauh was that the main thrust of the piece was to mourn the antiunion uses to which the tragedy would be put rather than mourning the dead.

I refuse to apologize for stating my affection and sympathy for Bayard Rustin even as I detailed our political disagreements.

Finally, a man who can, within a single sentence, boast of his "high standards of political debate" and then dismiss a reasoned, serious critique of his views as "greasy kid stuff" needs no further refutation. □

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1. Title of Publication: DISSENT. 2. Date of Filing: October 1, 1973. 3. Frequency of Issue: Quarterly. 4. Location of Known Office of Publication: 509 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10017. 5. Location of the Headquarters or General Business Offices of the Publishers: 509 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10017. 6. Names and Addresses of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor: Publisher: none. Editor: Irving Howe, 509 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10017. Managing Editor: Edith Tarcov, 509 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10017. 7. Owner (If owned by a corporation, its name and address must be stated and also immediately thereunder the names and addresses of stockholders owning or holding 1 percent or more of total amount of stock. If not owned by a corporation, the names and addresses of the individual owners must be given. If owned by a partnership or other incorporated firm, its name and address, as well as that of each individual, must be given): Dissent Publishing Corporation, 509 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10017; Irving Howe, 509 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10017; Lewis Coser, 509 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10017. 8. Known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning 1 percent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages or other securities: None. 9. For Optional Completion by Publishers mailing at the regular rates (Section 132,121 *Postal Service Manual*) 39 U.S.C. 3626 provides in pertinent part: "No person who

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tributed to news agents, but not sold. Average number of copies each issue during preceding 12 months—1,050. Actual number of copies of single issue nearest to filing date—1,150. E. Total distribution (sum of C and D). Average number of copies each issue during preceding 12 months—6,400. Actual number of copies of single issue nearest to filing date—6,650. F. Office use, left-over, unaccounted, spoiled after printing. Average number of copies

each issue during preceding 12 months—1,700. Actual number of copies of single issue nearest to filing date—850. G. Total (sum of E and F—should equal net press run shown in A). Average number copies each issue during preceding 12 months—8,100. Actual number of copies of single issue nearest to filing date—7,500. I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete. Stanley Plastrick, Business Manager. □

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of publicly discussing a deleted paragraph, the Ervin committee hardly quibbled.

Yet even if the paragraph revealed an act as drastic as covert support of an invasion or *coup d'état*, the exposure of such an adventure, while damaging to Mr. Nixon's reputation, could promote national security, sensibly construed. In 1961 the *New York Times* killed Tad Szulc's piece on the proposed landing in Cuba. If the *Times* had printed the story, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., later suggested, the project might have been abandoned. An embarrassed John Kennedy would have condemned the press for publishing government secrets, but the publication could have made the nation more secure for the next decade. Unencumbered by the greater embarrassment of the Bay of Pigs, Kennedy might have been less determined to look tough, and more skeptical, about dispatching advisers to Vietnam. And, without the Bay of Pigs as a prelude, we might have avoided the Cuban missile crisis which, more than any confrontation since World War II, threatened our security, that is, our existence.

In addition to recognizing that our vital interests don't necessarily depend on the current president's unblemished image, we must correlate Watergate with other losses of liberty. There are congressmen who are eager to get the guilty today who would vote for preventive

detention or bans on "obscenity" tomorrow. In this company, Mr. Weicker's mugwump outrage, though belated, is admirable. Many of his fellows seem more concerned about preserving the orderly, nonideological competition between the two major parties. The Ervin committee was incredulous that "dirty tricks" used against the likes of Huey Long and Henry Wallace had been imported into the mainstream to abuse respectable people like Lawrence O'Brien. Does anyone imagine that a Senate panel would have expressed escalating indignation if Administration agents had been exposed stalking the offices of *Rolling Stone*, tapping phones at the Socialist Workers party, or auditing tax returns from the Christian Nationalist Crusade? Indeed, if the CRP had focused on the "extremist" McGovern instead of badgering Edmund Muskie, Henry Jackson, and O'Brien, they might have avoided a major investigation.

Yet Larry O'Brien is no more deserving of bugless conversations than the rest of us. Above all, we must relate the White House "horrors" of 1972 to the zeal with which politicians have promoted, and we have accepted, various kinds of repression. Indirectly, Lowell Weicker's freedom from harassment depends on Gus Hall's. Lawyers may complain that this is a slippery-slope argument. But, for three decades and more, the slope has been amply greased. □

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